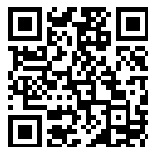
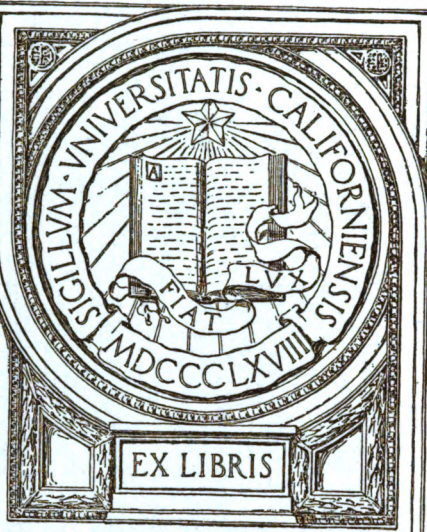

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**THE BEST FRENCH SHORT STORIES
OF 1924-25**

BY RICHARD EATON
MUSTAPHA KEMAL
UNDER THE RED FLAG
PIONNIERS OU DÉMENTS
MASHA

THE BEST "FRENCH SHORT STORIES OF 1924-25

AND THE
YEARBOOK OF THE FRENCH SHORT STORY

EDITED BY
RICHARD EATON

Editor of
"The Best French Short Stories of 1923-24"



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I shall be grateful to my readers for corrections and particularly for suggestions leading to the wider usefulness of these annual volumes. In particular, I shall welcome the receipt from authors, editors and publishers, of short stories printed during the period between June, 1925, and June, 1926, inclusive, which have qualities of distinction and yet are not printed in periodicals which would ordinarily come to my attention. Such communications should be addressed to "Care of the Service des Accrédités, Crédit Lyonnais, Boulevard Des Italiens 19, Paris, France.

R. E.

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PREFACE

Life is a gigantic battery of ideals and ideas whose positive and negative poles are represented by the extremists, conservatives and radicals alike. The harmony of life is attained by the union of the two poles. So it is with the short story in France for the year 1924-25, which differs radically from that of precedent years. It is manifestly reactionary in style. The wave of modernism which swept over the world after the war and which might be termed the bolshevism of literature, has been replaced in France by an equally ardent Fascism. While painting, sculpture, and other fine arts still remain ardent devotees of the modernism of Picasso and Archipenko, the short story has broken away from the post-war studio traditions. The Exposition of Decorative Arts clothed in its twentieth century garb, has bidden in vain to the muse of the short story to follow in his path.

Not that the school of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* has ceased to create new works of genius worthy of Proust and Morand at their best. During the twelve months covered by this volume, however, there is a marked absence of short stories by the younger, more radical, group of French writers. Morand alone has contributed a book of more than ordinary value. Girardoux, Kessel, Lacretelle, Coc-teau, Drieu La Rochelle, Aragon, Valéry Larbaud, have published practically nothing during the past year. It is true that more than one member of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* group has given promise of work of great genius in the twelve months to come. Meanwhile, however, looking cold-bloodedly at the list of short stories published during the past year and more particularly at those which have been selected as representative of the best in current French literature, one must admit that modernism singularly is absent.

The French short story of 1924-25 is best characterized by such perfect examples of the older French literature as

"Comme C'est Arrivé," by Pierre Mille, or "Le Jour du Grand Prix," by Pierre Benoit.

True, this volume contains likewise a rather famous short story by Paul Morand which is the exception to the generalization which I have just made, but it is Morand.

The title of "best" as applied to the short stories is, of course, always a courageous title to assume. In making my choice I have been aided by many French colleagues and my choice represents what are considered unquestionably the best French stories if one applies the standards of their own literature. I have, however, omitted several stories which would conform to this standard but whose character would have been certainly displeasing to the Anglo-Saxon public for which this volume is primarily intended. The stories, hence, have graded on a basis of seventy-five per cent for literary value in France and twenty-five per cent for conformity with the principles of the American Short Story.

R. E.

**THE BEST FRENCH SHORT STORIES
OF 1924-25**

NOTE.—The order in which the stories in this volume are printed is not intended as an indication of their comparative excellence; the arrangement is alphabetical by authors.

LOVE AND MONSIEUR CHARIBOT

By AUGUSTE BAILLY

(From *Les Œuvres Libres*)

IT was ten minutes to six. The books balanced, the cash verified, and the safe with its combination of five letters and five numbers locked, M. Charibot removed his sleeve protectors of black lustrine and stepped out of the glass-and-metal enclosed cage in which he had been sitting since two o'clock. Then carefully closing its door, which only his key and that of the director could unlock, he crossed the room, hat in hand.

"You are leaving, Monsieur Charibot?" It was Claustre, the assistant cashier, who thus addressed him.

"Yes, I'm stepping out now. My work is finished."

"Pretty soft! Well, mine will be soon."

The fact that he left ten minutes earlier than the other employees was a source of pride to M. Charibot, a visible symbol of his prestige, and a noteworthy token of the esteem in which he was held by his employers.

He stepped back abruptly as he neared the door, stepped back as hurriedly as if he had seen a serpent, and removed his hat with obsequious reverence, mumbling almost inaudibly, "Good evening, *maître*, and how are you?"

"Good evening, Charibot. Oh, I have nothing to complain of." The words slipped carelessly from the mouth of an obese man with a ruddy, greasy complexion, and full, sensual lips; a man dressed in gaudy, unbecoming clothes, who hurried past him out the door without glancing up, and with no thought of apology.

With a wildly beating heart, M. Charibot reopened the door which the other had allowed to slam in his face and stepped out into the Boulevard St. Germain, where he could still see the heavy figure with its curious half-rolling, half-

slouching gait, which was soon swallowed up in the flood of pedestrians. It was the poet, Roger Lamirande, the author of the famous "Poisonous Gardens" and "The Mocking Heart." Passersby jostled him and hurried past without suspecting that they thus came into brief contact with genius. For them M. Charibot felt a deep pity. He knew the master; had paid him ten thousand francs in royalties: had spoken with him, and Roger Lamirande had called him by name. . . . Charibot flung back his head, squared his frail shoulders, a touch of pathos in their droop, and surveyed the world with the eyes of a conqueror. This he could do, although they were sad, emotionless, dull little eyes with no flash of brilliance save that which his gold-rimmed spectacles reflected on them. Eyes of a sluggish brown, wide set in an emaciated face fringed by a straggly beard whose greyish tint betrayed his fifty years. But as he considered his reflection in the windows of the publishing house, the vague face mirrored against the checkered background of multi-colored books, prints, line drawings, magazine covers, and bizarre posters, he actually saw himself as he had long pictured himself in his dreams: fair, with a beard like Christ's, eyes of sweet solemnity, and that proud melancholy which stamps the poet as the favorite of the gods. For, once his leather desk pad, his bills, accounts, and double entry ledgers were left behind him, old man Charibot was of the company of those transcendent beings who move in a world of fancy, dote on fantasy, and ride Pegasus without check or harness. Unimpressive and lonely as he was, his life work was cut out for him and was rapidly nearing completion. In the "Songs of a Suffering Soul," six thousand Alexandrines with alternating rhymes and with the cæsura invariably in the sixth foot, giving somewhat the effect of a geometrically accurate part in smoothly pomaded locks—he would give to the world a new conception of the height of spiritual and emotional purity and finesse that poetry might attain.

As he neared the church of St. Germain-des-Prés, a fresh young voice, musical as the ripple of spring water over polished pebbles, and soft as the fragrant May twilight, fell like a caress on his ear.

"Pardon me, Monsieur, could you direct me to la rue des Saints Péres?"

M. Charibot stepped back as precipitately as though a truculent fist had threatened his face and, much against his will, looked at his questioner. It was a young woman of about twenty-five, a girl whose open countenance and simple smile revealed her as an obviously innocent and naïve country girl who would ask directions only from a decidedly respectable person.

M. Charibot felt his cheeks flame, and his eyes blinked and his vision became blurred behind his protecting glasses. Emotion impeded his voice. He had always found it difficult to converse with a woman except from behind the sheltering barrier of his cashier's cage. He even found it impossible to register a letter or dispatch a money order unless he could find a post-office window in charge of a man. He tried to smile and vainly endeavored to collect his wits. The rue des Saints Péres was well known to him. He traversed it frequently. But this unexpected query made it appear to him as a section of a strange and distant Paris of which he knew nothing. Inarticulately he stammered:

"Why, yes . . . certainly . . . uh . . . I don't remember . . ."

Suddenly he recovered sufficient intelligence to enable him, he scarcely knew how, to utter:

"First to the right . . . then to the left."

"Thank you, so much," the pleasant voice murmured softly, and the young woman, turning away, promptly forgot the pitiful, quavering old gentleman in whose thoughts she was to remain one of the most precious possessions of his love life.

Eventually Charibot reached the rue Jacob where he lived. His step quickened, a joyous strength warmed his fatigued muscles. His ordeal had lasted but a second or two. In that brief iota of time he had been forced to speak a few words to an attractive woman with whom he was standing face to face. He had felt the intolerable weight of those clear eyes, and as he trembled with the constitutional tremors of a sick man, his shoulders drooped

under the thought of that weight, with a feeling akin to shame. But now his imagination leaped and curvetted and there was nothing to curb its flight or check its exaggerations. He was thinking.

"Me she singled out among all those passersby . . . what beautiful eyes she had, liquid pools as soft and changing as a shaded pool . . . such a limpid amber, so pure, so candid . . . and that little mouth, tender, with its pathetic droop occasionally quickening into a childish pout. Ah, to touch it ever so softly with one's own lips, to open those sweet lips with a kiss, to feel them quiver exquisitely and to separate them as one might the petals of a flower . . . to press inward upon them, softly, slowly, as on the cool, yielding flesh of a pomegranate."

"Where in hell do you think you are?" a coarse voice broke in upon his reverie and he was dimly aware of a bulky person smelling of onions and strong tobacco. A reflex movement landed M. Charibot once more on the sidewalk, whence, unknowingly, he had stepped down squarely in the path of a push cart propelled by a workman who, by an adroit backward jerk, had prevented his cart from striking the old cashier. His abuse struck a discordant chord on the ear of the pseudo-poet, who scurried away like a rabbit toward its burrow.

"Moldy old wreck! When did you leave the village, today? Have to keep our eyes open for everything. . . ."

"Her name ought to be André," he mused. He took a sensuous pleasure in repeating it to himself. "André. . . . It's a lovely name. It combines the intangible charm and grace of the sweetest femininity with all the dignity, serenity and noblesse of a superior soul. . . ." Pleased with the originality of the phrase which he had coined, he stopped for a moment to note it in a tiny notebook he carried for the purpose, and then resumed his dreams: dreams, light and airy as bubbles; soft, languorous things that fluttered in his head like great moths and fanned his imagination with gorgeous, vari-colored wings. Desire flared through his body like a twisting flame. He pictured her kisses and the delights of her soft caresses . . . and then his thoughts turned to the heroic. "If she had been

there just now and that ruffian had insulted her . . . I hurl myself upon him. Before he understands what happens, I knock him in the gutter with one blow . . . she gives me her hand . . . her adorable eyes are full of tears, but she smiles bravely. . . . 'You have saved me . . . be my friend . . . I am alone . . . if only you can love me a little, you will be everything to me.' . . . Oh, André . . . André, my life is yours."

Still dreaming he entered the tiled hall of the old house in which he lived and, as always, hurried to pass the lodge of the concierge, where, as usual, M. and Mme. Diamant were exchanging the amenities of the evening. Mme. Diamant, large, bony, and red-nosed, was shouting in a voice that echoed and reëchoed through the courtyard and recalled the rocks and gorges of her native Béarn:

"You beast . . . you robber . . . stole twenty francs out of my closet to buy sweets for some of your dear little girls . . . you had one up in the maid's room yesterday. Wait until I tell the boss on you, you . . ."

To which torrent of invective, M. Diamant, small, correct, ceremonious to the point of pomposity (he was a *mâitre d'hôtel*—extra charges for weddings and banquets)—replied in a slow voice, the words, cold and distinctly enunciated, falling like drops of water from the point of an icicle. "You slut . . . if you don't keep your mouth shut, I'll close it with one of your own flat irons."

M. Charibot fled and, without pausing for breath, climbed the five flights of stairs that led to his room. He never passed the lodge without hearing this exchange of insults or seeing actual violence, but the constant repetition only intensified the fear and horror and disgust that such spectacles aroused in him, and he could never quite determine if the avoidance of these domestic animosities compensated him for the palpitations that racked his body when he had hurried up the stairs.

Once in the three rooms that made up his apartment, he felt himself safe. He washed his hands in the kitchen, which also served as the dressing room, and paused for a moment at the window, from which he could see the noble old spire of St. Germain-des-Prés overshadowing the roofs

and housetops of la rue St. Benoit. It was a tranquil view and he enjoyed watching the shadows of the evening creep like a frightened girl through the irregular streets.

He cherished this quarter of Paris, this quarter, gray and mellowed with age, a quarter with which he was thoroughly familiar and which, therefore, did not present the troubling and mysterious aspect which unknown streets had for him. Here all was friendly and there was naught unusual to disturb him. Only across the street he could find a meal in the dining room of Mechin, the wine merchant and caterer. Every Saturday he gathered with three fellow workers from the publishing house in the café at the corner of la rue de Bonaparte, where all was cosy and the waiters called him by name. The daily greeting of the baker and milkman was to be found in the freshness of the milk and the warm fragrance of his croissants. Every day at seven minutes of nine he received his paper at the stand on la rue St. Benoit. His barber was but across the street, the bathing establishment around the corner. All the elements of human solidarity and comfort seemed to be centered in this fourth-story lodging on la rue Jacob and in the imagination of this ineffectual little man in whose heart there burned inextinguishably this fruitless flame of love.

After brushing his clothes and cleaning his boots he sat down at his desk, opened a large cardboard folio, and—to put himself in the proper mood—for he affected temperament—reread the verses he had written the previous evening:

“Fiery spark caught from divine meditation
Which among mortals has made me a king.
Oh my soul, why these fears, this mad hesitation,
This waiting for what the morrow will bring.”

He read them over several times, first to himself, then aloud. He liked his own poetry which seemed to suggest that of Lamartine. Pen in hand he endeavored to rekindle the inspiration which, with genius and facility, would bring this masterpiece to a glorious conclusion. But the idea was

elusive. He did not know quite what he wanted to say, although he had a dim realization of how to say it. Only two thousand more Alexandrines and the task would be completed. M. Charibot had already composed in his mind the review which Roger Lamirande would write for the *Figaro*.

"Spiritual poetry has been recently enriched by a volume called 'Suffering Souls' that places its author, M. Anthelme Charibot, in the foremost rank of the great poets of mankind. Sophisticated and accustomed as I am to the unexpected revelation of talent, I could not read this product of genius without being profoundly stirred both by the depth and subtlety of its thought and by the purity and fertility of its phrasing. A mystic who is not obscure, a psychologist who is not devoid of interest, a pessimist without malice, and a cynic who is not bitter or but merely clever, Anthelme Charibot analyzes all the delusions, the despairs, and the wounds which an uncompromising soul of intrinsic nobility meets at every turn. But still this volume is concluded with a comforting note of faith, the assertion of a passionate love for God, and a firm belief in his power and glory."

Nevertheless inspiration was obdurate. A student of music who lived on the third floor drove her scattered flock of scales up and down their uneven ivory path. Rising, falling, rising, falling, as though they must rise and fall throughout all eternity until more harmonious chords sounded the resurrection. M. Charibot scratched his ear with his penholder and the movement caused the scales to vibrate and reëcho in his brain. It was intolerable. He would never be able to concentrate. Suddenly it occurred to him that the young woman of the Boulevard St. Germain would be among those to read his poems, and seeing his picture in the shop windows she would recognize him.

"She will write me . . . she will come to me . . . she will say 'I knew it was not merely chance . . . I knew I would find you again some day. You will cherish me and I will take your tiredness home. All the happiness you have sought, I am bringing to you . . . here is my heart . . . here is my love.' . . ."

Charibot threw his penholder down, slammed his copy book closed and got up. No use trying to stick it out . . . no inspiration . . . impossible to do good work . . . must have dinner anyway. . . . And he went out to his evening meal.

It was magnificent outside, vibrant, languorous, warm, thrilling and seductive as the low call of birds heard at dawn, wholly fascinating, and pregnant with murmurings and shadows of romance. Under the trees, in that part of the Bois crossed by the Avenue des Acacias, the night was still and fresh, fragrant as sweet grass and flowers. On the smooth, broad thoroughfare, reflecting the lights of the earth and the sky, the automobiles slid by, cutting the darkness sharply with the double flash of their lamps. For a second the silhouettes of the trees would stand out in the dazzling glare, black against the violet of the night, then as suddenly fade like shadows into the darkness.

M. Charibot, cane in hand, was walking slowly through the shrubbery. He walked with a heart beating heavily, quivering with inexpressible ecstasy, with vague pain, and with unassuaged desires. When he passed a pair of lovers, revealed to him only as a shapeless, whispering blot at the foot of some protecting oak or elm, he quickened his step and pretended not to notice them. He dreaded to think that these nocturnal couples might consider him one of those morbidly unhappy prowlers who wish to feast their eyes on pleasures of which they may not or cannot know. Charibot was pure in heart. He did not pry. He came as a poet to steep his soul in the fugitive enchantment of these spring nights. It gave him an exquisite happiness to dream of love in these woods where he knew the throbbing reality of passion to be close. He felt there was nothing perverse in the urge that brought him there.

Sometimes, as though the tree had suddenly released a dryad, a dark figure would be suddenly outlined against the more transparent darkness, and approaching him, a woman's voice would murmur: "Hello, dearie," and a loose garment would be half slipped aside and the lascivious gleam of naked flesh—pearl gray in the uncertain light—flashed out at him. And M. Charibot would flee,

overcome by an emotion so violent that his legs failed him and his knees knocked together. Sometimes the woman pursued him, recognizing from experience the timidity of those night-walkers on whom one must force the joys they seek.

"Oh, come on . . . handsome boy . . . don't be afraid . . . there's no harm." . . . From a tight throat the cashier would mutter hoarsely, "I haven't time . . . my wife expects me," and then take to his heels.

Perhaps the sixth or seventh time this happened to him, he felt a little bolder and decided to talk with one of them. He liked the idea of engaging them in conversation and appearing chivalrous toward them, these poor derelict women, whom he pitied, who attracted him strangely, and whom he always imagined as young and attractive, if his illusions were not too harshly dispelled by the sickening smell of cosmetics or cheap wine. In a voice which he tried to make nonchalant and carefree he would say, "No time tonight . . . sorry . . . another time." He would even add, "Business pretty fair these nights?"

But the usual answer to this question, which he could never utter in a wholly natural voice, was a complete and dismal silence. Often his interlocutor fled, and sometimes, by means of a low whistle, sought to warn the others of the presence of a plain clothes man, for which fearsome being she had mistaken him. Then M. Charibot, his own fears increased by those he had unwittingly aroused, would hastily seek the more open and frequented parts of the avenue, anxious, tremulous, shuddering, and at a loss to understand exactly what had occurred.

Nevertheless he was happy with a strange happiness in which the pain of loneliness and enforced solitude was shot through and through with vague hopes and wild, exotic desires. To him, everything seemed to present, to reproduce the love which surrounded him on every side, yet was absent from his life. From all the benches he heard soft, smothered murmurs or the hushed echo of a too ardent kiss, and Charibot felt that for him as for others there must come that divinely appointed hour of love. That peculiar exultation which tonight was stronger than usual

in him, because of the young stranger of the Boulevard St. Germain, made him quicken his walk. He threw out his narrow chest and, flinging back his shoulders, whirled his cane aggressively. Fragments of poetry welled up from the depths of his memory and stood out in his mind like red poppies in a drab field. From all the poets, from all ages they came to him. He murmured with St. Sorlin:

“Everywhere I feel hearts flying around me.”

Or with Brooke:

“Oh love, our hungry lips that press so tight that time’s
and old
God’s dream nodding in heaven.”

One heart, one love only would have sufficed. Ah, with what tender and passionate care he would surround that rare being who should love him. How he would protect her from the cruelties and disillusion of life. With what sacrificial ardor he would pour his life out for her like sweet red wine. Let a rival but dare to approach, he would strike him down at her feet . . . he would be always jealous . . . he was already jealous of that unknown love of his . . . jealous, yes . . . Corneille’s verses to Psyche flashed through his mind like a flight of fast birds, and he pictured himself as that Attic lover, jealous of the sun and wind that caress his mistress, of the very air which she breathes, and of the garments that clasp her in their embrace. His heady enthusiasm waxed more intoxicating. His cane described great circles in the darkness. He was walking faster and faster, hurrying through the darkness, and his mind was rushing like a torrent. Suddenly he cried at the top of his voice:

“I am John of Aragon, ye kings, hangmen, lackeys,
If your scaffolds are small, change them!”

A burst of sneering laughter brought him swiftly to the world of reality. He realized that he was in the vicinity of the Port Dauphine, in the full glare of the street lamps,

and before a bench on which a group of young people were sitting. He fled, bending his body as before a great blast, and he heard the affected, mocking voice of a young woman pursuing him with the words:

"You are my lion, superb and generous" . . .

And then in a moment he felt himself weary and defeated. Doubts assailed him, premonitions of sadness and unhappiness. Ah, no, he wasn't strong, he wasn't handsome, he wasn't daring. If he had spent the years of his adolescence and youth without knowing love, if this hideous shyness which made him stammer and tremble in the presence of any woman could keep him from the most pitiful adventure, wasn't it sheer madness still to hope for one. Now that his fifty years had played havoc with his looks, thinned his straight hair, dimmed his eyes, and added a dingy grayness to the beard that had once been brown . . . would he go to his death without knowing the sublime bliss of a freely given kiss. . . . In the dog days when his flesh was prodded by almost unendurable desires he would go again, as before, to seek illusion and solace from the high priestess of love in that humble temple in the rue Mazarin . . . and even at that, what anguish he must endure before he could cross its threshold!

Afterwards when he went to the publishing house he would say to Claustre, in the tone of one accustomed to conquests, "I went out last night with a mighty good looking woman."

"Ah, you old Casanova," Claustre would answer, "they don't put much over on you, you know your stuff all right! We know all about you. But do you have to take them all?"

"Oh, well," Charibot would protest, "I'm not trying to make myself out more attractive to women than I am. She wasn't, I'll admit, a society woman. No, she was . . . a professional. But, do you know, my dear fellow, that those women are the only ones that really know anything about love. Love is an art, not merely a pastime. When you go to a concert you'd rather hear some first-rate artist,

wouldn't you, than some silly amateur who makes a lot of mistakes?"

"Well, yes, that's true," Claustre would concede amiably.

"Yes," Charibot went on. "Yes, surely." The subject intrigued him and he did not wish the conversation to drop. Then he appeared to meditate.

"Surely, a pretty woman, dainty, svelte, slender . . . you see! and intelligent, what's more. People think these women. . . . But no . . . that's where they're wrong. They're often more cultured than respectable women. . . . Really, you know. . . . And if you know how to talk to them, show them you're really interested and don't look down on them and all that . . . well, you'd be surprised, that's all . . . they show gratitude and tenderness . . . you can't imagine . . . and when it comes to loving . . ."

"You son of a gun," the other marveled, "and you're not even tired?"

"Tired, pooh . . . head a bit stuffy perhaps . . . but that'll pass off as soon as I get to work. Honestly, when I got home last night, I felt, I'll give you my word, like a new man, yes, even young. . . . I made some coffee and sat up and wrote poetry till two in the morning."

Those were the pictures of his life which M. Charibot painted as the underground whirled him along with the throngs. He never entered one of the hideous, crowded cars, the air heavy with the dull smell of perspiration and stale powder, without hoping to find the adventure that so many boast of meeting there, and he never emerged except laden with disappointment and bitterness, shoved and trampled upon without recompense, but never totally devoid of hope.

Anthelme Charibot that evening had wandered at length on the lower Champs Elysées, in the shrubbery surrounding the Grand Palais and under the trees of the Cour La Reine. He had surrendered to the sensuous charm of the warm darkness and to a curious emotion, in which the fear and envy that the sight of the furtive couples aroused in him was strangely conciliated with a profound tranquillity of spirit. Toward eleven o'clock he found himself walking along the Seine embankment, and he stopped and leaned

over the stone railing for a while. In the heavy, quivering mass of water the lights from the bridges and the quays were reflected in quavering golden lines. He saw red and green flames ceaselessly rising and falling, coming together to break apart and meet again. The stream flowed on and left them untouched. Irresistibly powerful it rushed to its destiny, momentarily obstructed perhaps by bridges and other obstacles which divided its waters, but sweeping on nevertheless when they reunited, majestic and purposeful. M. Charibot felt that he saw in this river the symbol of the destiny of mankind, which also knows no halt or rest, and whose joys are as the fugitive, trembling reflections of flame. . . . Ah, what was there, he asked himself, that was not but a transient joy or a momentary gain! Love? . . . Wealth? . . . Glory? . . . Only one of these seemed to him within his reach. Glory! It was for this that he lived and toiled. He knew not love. He was poor. But some day glory would crown his efforts. And the strength of his resolution made him clench his hands and set his jaw, and a deep sigh welled from him.

But wearying at length of this silent contemplation, he straightened up and began slowly walking along the bank. He felt himself purer, stronger, in every way prepared for a glorious career. Hadn't he made the necessary sacrifice? Why should he waste himself and exhaust his energies in the pursuit of those puerile joys of the senses, complete satisfaction from which he could never obtain? Who knew but that his verses would achieve a greater majesty and a purer spirituality because of this renunciation? A poet must not expect to share the mundane joys of the crowd beyond the pale. His must be the distilled pleasure resulting from the contemplation of less fleshly things. And as he walked along, his footsteps rang out on the pavements of the city which, he reflected, still ignored him, but whose farthest places would sometime reëcho with the praises and the glory of his name.

He had passed the Place de la Concorde and was nearing the Orangerie when it seemed to him that a woman's figure emerged suddenly from a bench between two trees and M. Charibot saw with uneasiness that she appeared to

be waiting. Although he did not halt his steps he had a feeling that everything within him had stopped. He looked desperately about him for some means of escape. He was alone on the broad quay that stretched away under the full moon. The waves of the river comforted him but offered no solution. What he should do, he decided, was to turn on his heel, cross the street, and go about his business like the resolute, implacable man that he was. But somehow he did not do this and he walked on, cowed and miserable. The woman did not move. Her back was to the street lamp and her face was but a vague shadow, and the fact that his own was fully illumined and cruelly exposed to observation did little to decrease M. Charibot's nervousness. He turned his head aside, and tried to assume a hard, preoccupied expression, but he failed completely and he could not escape that pleading, insinuating, inexorable voice. . . .

"Monsieur . . . Monsieur."

He was unable to affect indifference or to pretend that he had not heard, so he tried to utter the formula usual to him on such occasions.

"I have no time . . . have an appointment . . . sorry. . . ."

But his moving lips produced no sound. Anyway, he hadn't stopped; and with an incredible speed of thought he grasped the essentials of the situation in a flash of time, as is possible in such circumstances, and he found himself thinking . . . "She sees there's nothing doing. . . I've frightened her . . . she's going back to her bench . . . thank goodness. But suppose she had spoken to me again . . . why didn't she? Who knows, I might have yielded. Suppose I go back. . . . What if I should just pass the bench once more? . . . of course, though, she won't dare to start anything unless I speak to her . . . then what will she think of me? . . . her voice wasn't common, though. . . . I ought to go back, really I should . . . but I won't go back. . . ."

Scarcely a second had passed. He felt that he was looking stubbornly at the water, that the woman was walking beside him. He heard her murmur:

"I haven't any home . . . not any more . . . I was working, you see . . . and I lived in a furnished room . . . I got sick and then I lost my job . . . I had to sell everything I owned to pay for things . . . but I didn't get better . . . I had to go to the hospital. . . . I just came out this morning. . . . I'm up against it . . . no home, no money . . . and I'm not very strong as yet . . . if you're going to turn me down, tell me right away, it's all right. . . . The river's still here . . . only I'd rather do it right now than have to come back to it."

"Come home with me. You can depend on me to assist you," Charibot answered firmly. He had a sudden feeling of strength and virility. His timidity had passed. Since that stranger had seen in him something more than a casual passerby who might be prevailed upon to exchange a little money for a few caresses, since she turned to him as a powerful saviour, all was easy for him. He was at a loss only before the commonplace incidents of everyday life. Heroism seemed such a simple matter and he moved with ease and facility in its realms so familiar to his imagination. He turned to her now and looked at her fully and openly. She was watching him anxiously, her lips slightly compressed, for she had had a sudden intuition of the stakes for which she might play, and which were beyond the wildest hopes she had fostered when she accosted him. She had a moment of profound vision in which she read clearly the poor, aging face before her, and in that moment, all the secrets of M. Charibot's starved and lonely life were hers. She went on slowly with a mixture of impulsiveness and shyness as though she were speaking against her will:

"I want to be frank with you . . . even if it does put me in a bad light . . . I didn't just speak to you because you looked good . . . and this is the truth. . . . I liked your looks too, honestly. . . . I suppose you've been told that before, though. . . ."

"Oh, sometimes," murmured Charibot, too overcome to say more. Then in a tone which he vainly strove to make light and easy, he added, "Not so very often. . . ."

"There are many types of good looks," the woman went

on, "each has his own type. Don't you think so? Now yours is the kind that appealed to me . . . and I like your voice. It's a deep voice. . . . Solemn. . . . When I hear a voice like that I think of the tolling of bells and churches and all that. . . . Where do you live?"

"Very near here. . . . In the rue Jacob," and in the grip of a powerful emotion, the pitiful old man, eagerly seizing at the straw fate had cast in his path, went on, "You must tell me all your story. You haven't been happy. I haven't always been happy either, but I feel that happiness is on the way for us both. It wasn't mere chance that brought us together."

"No, it wasn't mere chance," the young woman reiterated gravely. "As it is, I still wonder that I dared to speak to you. Something made me. If I had stopped to think about it, I am sure I should never have dared."

"Are you sorry you did?" Charibot asked almost coyly.

She smiled faintly. "Silly . . . as if you don't know better . . . You know how I trusted you right away. I wouldn't have any one else. . . . And he mightn't have believed me either."

"I believed you."

"Yes, and that's what makes me happy . . . more than anything else you could do. It isn't so easy to find people who understand you."

"No, it isn't so easy," then in a low voice as though deprecating the boldness of the question, he asked, "What is your name?"

"Mathilde . . . Mathilde Bécherelle."

"Mathilde," he mouthed it slowly and his mouth rounded the syllables painstakingly and softly. Mathilde! The cashier cordially disliked a number of names, but none quite so much as this. It was one of a group of women's names, such as Rose, Sidonie, Josephine, Catherine, and Petronilla, that he particularly abominated. Then suddenly he felt guilty of never properly appreciating its charm. He savored the music of its two vowels. He pronounced them inwardly and lingered over them, and the long "I" in the name seemed a sound of wistful freshness. And when he uttered the name so tenderly, didn't

it seem to imply that the possessor belonged to him? Poetically, with almost no change it became Matylda. A question from the young woman cut short his reverie.

"And what is your name?"

"It's an ugly name," he admitted sheepishly, "Anthelme . . . Anthelme Charibot. . . ."

"Anthelme," she said astonished. "That's one I never heard before. Anthelme. . . . How funny . . . but it is different. . . . It's not your fault though . . . one just has to get used to it."

"Do you think you ever can?" he asked with some embarrassment.

"Done already, old dear," Mathilde declared simply.

Before they reached his home, Mathilde had already learned from her new friend everything that she desired to know. She learned that old Charibot was a bachelor with no relatives, that he was head cashier in an important publishing house, that his salary far exceeded his modest needs, that he was busy every day from nine till twelve and from two to six, and that he had always dreamed of knowing the love and tenderness of some woman who would share his life and his home. She intended to profit by all these bits of information.

She had, indeed, a profound distaste for work. Through the spite of a plain-clothes man, whose advances she had refused, she had already had a taste of prison life. In fact she had been released only the previous day. Recalling the perverted religion of her youth, she saw in the advent of M. Charibot a miracle which proved the existence of a loving and protecting Deity: a miracle which she certainly meant to make the best of. If she played her cards with circumspection, she realized that she would dominate the game.

She did not notice the dreary mediocrity when she reached his commonplace rooms. She saw a Louis XV table and bookcase, the coarse gilding of which dazzled her. The leather couch and padded chairs seemed the symbol of ease and some degree of prosperity, and all appeared to be a substantial bulwark against want. She admired a gallé vase on a Gothic pedestal, and the marble clock on

the mantelpiece held all the allurements of the columns and façade of a Greek temple. The feel of the carpet soothed her feet. Respectfully she said, "It's nice here."

"It's not bad, is it?" said Charibot, flattered. "It only lacks those little touches that a woman's presence would lend . . . you know . . . daintiness . . . a little lace . . . a work basket . . . cushions. . . ." He showed her about. "This is the kitchen, sometimes I use it for a dressing room. . . . There's gas in it to cook my breakfast. . . . I take my other meals out. . . . Or if I like, I have them sent over here. . . . This is my room." He had set the door ajar and glanced away in some embarrassment.

Mathilde looked through the door and saw another Louis Quinze room—at least he was consistent—a wardrobe with a long double mirror, a table, and heavy velvet hangings over the windows. Torn between admiration and envy she sighed a little anxiously and said again, "It's nice here."

Charibot felt himself to be floating above the earth. His happiness was so intense that his body seemed to dissolve in it and his whole consciousness drifted like smoke in the wind of his emotions. It was the first time that any woman, with the exception of the charwoman and the woman of his dreams, had entered his home. He would have liked to shout his happiness to his fellow lodgers, and when his gaze rested on the manuscript of the "Suffering Souls" he smiled scornfully and contemptuously. What was glory, but a hollow thing, to one who possessed love? Gallant and eager he cried, "But do, please, take off your hat."

"That's easy, it's neither pinned nor tied," the young woman answered, and with a quick gesture took off her little straw toque and laid it on the table. Then she ran her fingers through her short hair and smiled at Charibot, radiant but slightly ill at ease. He gazed at her with reverent tenderness.

"Lord, but you're pretty! . . . Your eyes are blue. . . ."

She burst out laughing. "Do you know, I suspected it all along." He joined her laughter—how tactfully she put him completely at ease—and how she disregarded his shyness. How young, and fresh, and spring-like she was. . . .

He drew a little closer to her and held out his hand. . . .

"Friends?" he murmured.

"Friends," she asserted with gusto.

"This is your home," the old man said. "At my age one doesn't dare question one's happiness. One daren't ask it whence it came or tell it to wait. . . . I feel as if you'd always been an integral part of my life. . . . The sunshine and an almost celestial glory came in with you. . . . When you leave, it will be night."

"Listen," said Mathilde Bécherelle seriously, "I'm not a schemer. . . . I want to tell you . . . when you know me better you'll know whether you want me to stay or not. . . . As long as you do want me, I'll stay. You're not binding yourself in any way. There's no reason why you should. And when you've had enough of me, I'll go . . . But I'll always be grateful for the way you've treated me tonight . . . so there."

"Don't talk to me like that," M. Charibot said in a low tone. "I would give you all my heart if I didn't already know that you possessed it." They faced each other in silence, each groping for the appropriate word to break the tension. "I'll make some chocolate." It was Anthelme who spoke first, "I have some biscuits. We'll have a jolly little supper, just the two of us."

"Good," she beamed, "I'll help you. Just watch me make that kitchen of yours shine."

Delightful kitchen! He lighted the gas and broke the chocolate into a saucepan, while Mathilde, now thoroughly at home and very much at ease, wiped off the cups and spread a cloth over one corner of the table. The old man felt that he was a fiery and unconquerable soul. All his dreams were materializing and with a fantastic splendor. The actions of a few seconds had changed his whole life. How could he have lived alone all these years? Why had he lived in ignorance of such intoxicating joys as that of this beguiling presence, of this youth at his side, of this fresh hopefulness as candid as a clear summer dawn. Oh, but life would be a rhapsody for him. The indescribable charm of her careless laughter! The adorable sound of her eager white teeth breaking the biscuits! The exalted hap-

pininess of saving a child whom life had battered and tormented until she wished to die, and who found rest and forgetfulness with him, and who trusted him! The marble clock dropped a solitary note into the stillness and they both sat so silent that it seemed as though they must hear the beating of the secret places of eternity.

"One o'clock," Charibot muttered startled.

"One o'clock," she echoed.

They got up slowly, he full of a sudden poignant anguish; she with a fierce determination to play her part so as not to compromise her future. They entered his workroom without speaking.

"We'll have to arrange things," the cashier suggested. She remained silent and distant and he added, "I have my couch here. . . . I often sleep on it when any of my friends come in from out of town. . . . I'll be perfectly comfortable. . . ." And at the same time he was wondering, "Will she understand that I am respecting her? . . . Suppose she misunderstands. . . . She might think my restraint an insult. . . .?" He tried again, speaking with the utmost difficulty. "You . . . you could take my room," then, with an enormous effort, he added, "How little you know me. I only said it because I was afraid you'd despise me if I didn't say it. . . . But, Mathilde . . . love me as you would love a father, until the time when you can love me in some other way. I adore you because you are so pure."

"You understand me," she said slowly. "It makes me very happy . . . you may kiss me. . . ." She offered him her forehead, and, almost swooning, with closed eyes and trembling knees, he pressed his quivering lips to it.

In less than a fortnight Mathilde Bécherelle was not only thoroughly at home but felt herself secure and powerful in the position as mistress of M. Charibot's household. She had begun by dismissing the charwoman who, for twenty years, had been coming every morning to sweep, wash the solitary breakfast cup, and shine the two pairs of shoes that alternately covered M. Charibot's feet. "What little work there is to do, I'll take care of myself," she had announced. "It will give me an interest." She had

another and a stronger interest, however, and that was shopping to complete her trousseau.

"Throw away everything you had when you came," Charibot implored her, "I don't want you to have anything, not a single thing, except what you get from me . . . and you don't have to be careful. . . . I've been saving money for years. . . . No way to spend it." And she had filled her wardrobe with lingerie, outer garments, shoes, silk stockings, and those collars known as "throat supporters," which she wore trimmed with imitation valenciennes lace.

"It's not that I need them," she explained. "My throat can stand up without them, but, somehow, I feel more dressed with one on." And M. Charibot, having paid for them, would caress the fragile, shimmering fabrics with trembling fingers. They intoxicated him as though their folds already contained the warmth and fragrance of the slender body they would enclose.

So great was his happiness and so powerful his need of proclaiming it, that he had been unable to keep his secret. He had confided it to the concierge, to Mechin who now sent over all the meals, to the waiter in the café where he had frequently played cards. He had told them all in a voice that he strove to make natural while his eyes and facial muscles betrayed his excitement.

"My life is completely changed. . . . I have a young woman, a relative from the country, staying with me . . . a most charming creature . . . everything about her, not only her beauty, but her simplicity, her naïveté . . . and such delicacy . . . I'm very happy . . . I can't help showing how happy I am." This shameless happiness of his, although he did not suspect it, stirred up deep resentment throughout his little circle of acquaintances. The shopkeepers were polite, but no longer familiar in their contacts with him, and they made no bones about spying on this outrageous couple who pretended not to be living together. They sneered at him from behind their shop windows, and winked suggestively and shrugged their shoulders, and made lascivious jests. Mme. Diamant was openly hostile and whenever she saw them coming went into her rooms and slammed the door emphatically and with much signif-

icance. She could never forgive M. Charibot for what she considered his wilful deception, and she poured out her wrath and indignation into the curious ears of the servants who paused, baskets on their arms, when coming from the market.

"Can you beat it . . . an old man like him . . . a respectable man too—as I thought—I give you my word I liked him. . . . Sometimes I used to think if I were ever quit of Diamant, I'd begin again with him . . . he's a good fellow, you know, and clean, and easy to get along with . . . and then what do you think he goes and does? . . . picks up a woman, Heaven knows where . . . brings her back here to a decent house and keeps her like a lady, and then has the nerve to tell you she's a relation from the country . . . a likely story . . . a vicious rake, that's what he is. . . . Diamant is better than that if he'd only stop running after the girls. . . . But those two . . . they make me sick. . . . Oh, I do my work . . . I give the old boy his mail just as if he were a respectable man . . . but that doesn't keep me from thinking and saying what I think . . . I guess I've got that much right."

M. Diamant, who had formerly ignored the existence of the old cashier, now greeted him habitually with a small, crooked smile accompanied by the furtively familiar air of an accomplice, and he always bowed respectfully to Mathilde, as respectfully as he did at a wedding when he asked the bride, "*Chateau Iquem*" or "*Romanée-Conti*?" Mathilde thought he looked like a thug.

"He's out of the Rogues' Gallery," she had said to Charibot, but because the *mâitre d' hotel* frightened her, she was exceedingly pleasant to him. And this also infuriated Mme. Diamant.

"Look at her . . . the trollop . . . making eyes at my husband. . . . Oh, she likes the old men . . . that one, she's sly . . . she'd better look out, though . . . I'll give her no old man. . . . Just because Diamant and I scrap occasionally is no reason for her getting ideas in her head. My husband's my husband, and I'm going to keep him. . . ."

His colleagues in the publishing house had also heard

Charibot's story. His friend Claustre dug him sympathetically in the ribs, "You old son of a gun, what are you trying to put over on us? . . . A country relative . . . why, you've told me twenty times that you didn't have a relative in the world . . . this new one of yours must have dropped out of the moon. . . . Tightwad . . . one doesn't keep secrets from one's friends . . . come on . . . come clean . . . you will be forgiven much because your sins are innumerable. . . . Let's have it . . . I'll be mum as a dead fish. . . ."

Charibot needed no urging. He felt too great a need of proclaiming his happiness. He told the whole story with but one slight alteration. "I caught her skirt just as she was about to jump from the railing of the bridge. . . . Luckily, I am stronger than I look. Another second and I would have been too late and it would all have been over . . . you understand . . . well, after one saves a life you can imagine how one feels . . . and when it's a pretty young woman . . . pretty, tender, well educated . . . and when you think that she might have died a horrible death . . . and you realize the suffering and courage it required for a young thing to make such a resolve . . . Oh, it's all very well to be sophisticated, and cynical, and doubtful. . . . One may have seen and done just about everything. . . . But this is love. . . . How can I help it? . . . Put yourself in my place, Claustre, it's love, isn't it? . . . obviously?"

"Oh, obviously," Claustre would agree, puzzled, mocking, and slightly envious. Soon the entire staff of the publishing house thought of M. Charibot as a gay old dog. But he, who only wanted to give back to the world a fraction of the marvelous happiness which now filled his life, overflowing as he was with gratitude for the lot that had befallen him, and bubbling over with fellowship for all men, shed his ecstatic smile on all alike, on salesmen, stenographers, on the authors to whom he paid the royalties, even on the poor crippled beggars huddled by the sidewalk. He loved them all. He felt that he was loved by all, that life was very beautiful, and God very bountiful.

When he had finished his accounts and closed his cash

box, he would hurry back, his heart beating as though he were a young student rushing to a rendezvous with his mistress. He no longer stopped to gaze in the windows of the *bouquinistes* and the antiquarians. The way home was interminable. He would run at top speed and barely snatch the time to buy a few roses or a dozen carnations. . . . Paradise awaited him. . . .

Sometimes he would take Mathilde out to dine in the evening. He didn't dare offer her his arm, but he pressed very close and forgot all the world in the proximity. She would wear a simple gray skirt, severe in cut, and a light blouse through which gleamed the flesh of her arms and throat, and her head crowned with a straw hat trimmed with violets. She walked beside him calm and serious, looking neither to the right nor to the left, with a decided, dignified, and chaste walk. M. Charibot preferred a certain little Italian restaurant on the rue de Ponthieu. They would climb the creaking stairs and then he would open the door and stand aside as Mathilde entered. The room was long and narrow. One passed in front of the desk and received the greeting of the proprietor . . . the manager hurried forward, cordial and obsequious . . . the waiters bustle . . . they shout his order into the kitchen . . . "Du Ravioli, Costolette Milanese, Spaghetti al sugo." The walls were covered with strange, rudimentary, and complex frescoes in which the campanile of Florence nestled against the Doges' Palace, and leering grotesques, with gargoylian visages, and dancing bacchantes, draped in vines, peered out at one from wreaths of leaves and berries of brilliant hues. A chandelier of Venetian glass terminating in bunches of red, green, and white grapes, dominated each of the secretive little dining compartments. M. Charibot would scan the bill of fare, nonchalantly stroking his beard. Mathilde maintained a demure silence. Her only regret was that the menu did not contain some of her favorite dishes—Boeuf Bourguignon, or Capin Sauté—but she had a passion for Zabaglione. Then M. Charibot would begin to muse . . . "We'll go away . . . to Italy . . . a dream I've had since I was a boy . . . down in those old mellowed cities . . . or a villa on the Riviera . . . a little

cream-colored villa with a tiny garden fronting the sea and roses about the door . . . or in the olive-covered slopes of Tuscany, where the young girls, skirts pinned up around their loins, tread the must from the great purple grapes . . . or Sienna with its old ruins. . . . I've often wondered why I didn't go before . . . nothing kept me from it . . . just didn't get around to it . . . that's all. . . . I was waiting for you . . . it must have been fate that prevented my going before. We were meant to go together, to absorb all that marvelous beauty and revel in that land that is hallowed and sanctified with age . . . everything about our meeting was miraculous."

And Mathilde, slightly more prosaic, would reply, "It certainly wasn't an ordinary one . . ." But she thought with more pleasure of the three weeks they were to spend in Brittany in August. She knew the sea only from the songs of Batril and from cheap novels. Charibot waxed lyrical in describing it to her. The great gray cliffs, the shifting sands, the sunshine through the cold fog, the little churches, the strong, taciturn folk. But she knew that she would be able to catch live shrimps and this seemed so incredible that she could not fully comprehend all that had occurred, and, like M. Charibot, though for quite different reasons, she at times asked herself if this wasn't some beautiful dream from which she would eventually awake.

However, as the weeks went by, she felt an increasing sense of security, and her ambitions and desires expanded correspondingly. At first she had thought only of assuring her position—a position which seemed most attractive to her—but she realized that her relations with Charibot presented certain unusual and abnormal aspects, and this worried her. What was their relation to each other? She had considered herself very clever when she refused to live with him as his mistress, but now she wondered if she could not obtain a stronger hold on him if she revealed to him some of the delights of the senses about which he apparently knew so little. On the other hand, how was she to go about it? Given an old chatterbox like that for whom nothing seemed to exist but talk and dreams and ideals, a sentimentalist who wept with ecstasy at her purity,

chastity and nobility: to offer him what he apparently had no desire for, might be one of the clumsiest blunders. But then, could they always live thus, like father and daughter, side by side and never touch each other? Mathilde could do without love but not indefinitely. And although she had no illusions as to the rapture the love making of M. Charibot would afford her, it seemed to her better than none at all. How was she to arouse in him a desire that she had, perhaps, made him feel was so hopeless that he had lost it? As she looked at it, there was but one solution for this problem . . . and that was marriage . . . but her common sense told her that this was an extravagant expectation and one improbable of realization. She could never quite forget just what she was, nor yet quite see herself as she appeared to her benefactor, so it seemed to her almost impossible that she would ever go into a church clad in the white veil and wedding ring of her dreams. What then was she to do? She would uncover her throat in his presence. She would sit down, her skirt pulled up as if by accident in such a way as to reveal her legs, clad in the sheerest of silk stockings, to the knees. She would melt with confusion and embarrassment . . . but . . . she would stand close to him in such a fashion that he could feel the softness of her bosom and the warmth of her body. But probably Charibot would apologize and become flustered, but do nothing more. The young woman wondered about the strangeness of the situation and was driven to ask herself time and time again, "How can one make an old idiot make love when ostensibly he has no desire to?"

She did not dream that after catching these glimpses of her throat and shoulders M. Charibot would be upset all day. She did not know that when she was asleep at night Anthelme would rise and tiptoe to the door of her room, that he bent his head to listen to her breathing, and that he himself was panting with desire and excitement, that his whole body was thirsting for her, and when he kissed her forehead, he almost swooned. His thoughts, too, dwelt on the idea of marriage, for the thought of living with her in any irregular relation would have seemed

blasphemy. But when the realization of his age and lack of charm came to him he would waive aside the dreams of marriage and think, "Who am I to possess such happiness? What right have I to enslave her youth? She'd leave me in disgust if I dared propose such an idea to her. . . . The notion is too preposterous . . . the dream too beautiful . . . one can't have everything." And tormented as he was by the desire which the languor of the summer augmented, he believed that he would be forced to endure it forever with no appeasement. And what desire it was! He would dream of her fragrant young body as a chalice out of which his own eager lips would drink deeply of the mysteries and delights of love . . . but, no . . . that could never be.

Now only a few days remained before their departure for Port Manech. This vacation and this journey were now the sole topics of conversation. M. Charibot had reserved two adjoining rooms for himself and his "niece" at the Ocean Hotel—an unfriendly building with the appearance of a barracks, perched on the top of a gray cliff. He described this country to Mathilde, the deep roads between the green walls, the flowering fields, the furze, and the winding paths among the rocks. Or he lingered on the people, their simple life, the church processions with the participants in native costumes, the blessing of the Virgin when the fishing fleet sailed for the cold northern seas . . . or the villages of grayish blue granite with the outer walls of stone . . . the houses with two chimneys squatted amid heaps of semi-liquid manure. . . .

She laughed, "Certainly there are some dirty people in this world. How do they get from one hovel to another?"

"They step on bundles of dry furze that are thrown along the walls and you sink down at every step because of the nature of the soil . . . splash . . . splash . . . and your foot sinks to the ankle in the manure."

"How horrible!" and she would give a delicate shudder.

"And what's more, in some of the huts there is but one room and the people sleep in cupboards in the wall and the cow, if there is one, lives in the house with the family.

And yet, in spite of all this, it is a very lovely and seductive country. The home of the mystics, folk of elemental simplicity, a land beloved of the artists."

"Are there many painters there?" Mathilde would ask.

"Painters? Are there! I should say so. . . . Everywhere, on all the cliffs, in all the coves, behind every tree, in every village. . . . There's . . . let me see . . ." and he would try to recall their names. . . . "There's Cottet. . . . He's well known . . . and Simon . . . and André Jolly . . . you'll see his house . . . a fascinating little place fronting the sea, with a tumbled garden on the cliffs and stately old pines and cypresses . . . and there's . . . well, I couldn't tell you all their names, there are so many!"

Mathilde clapped her hands. Her expression became more eager daily; she could hardly wait for their departure. Sometimes she smiled to herself, a curious, happy, introspective little smile, following some dream of her own. Charibot hardly dared to look at her for fear of betraying the desire which obsessed him.

As, deeply engrossed in his own thoughts, he was going to work one morning, he passed the lodge of the concierge and was so preoccupied in his dreaming of their departure for Brittany—now only two days off—that he failed to notice Mme. Diamant, who was herself engaged in conversation, or rather in a monologue, with one of the maids. Contrary to his usual habit, M. Charibot failed to greet this autocrat of the house, but he had not gone far when her harsh voice, made still more coarse with scorn and resentment, fell like a jagged rock into the limpid pool of his thoughts, "Under his nose, my dear . . . the poor fool . . . carrying on right under his very nose . . . and he's too proud to speak to any one."

M. Charibot started, violently shocked at the plainness of the language, and in spite of himself wondered who the poor wretch was whose deception provoked this onslaught. It did not seem likely that the deceived husband or lover who was plainly the subject of this diatribe could be Mme. Diamant's own consort, although that was not wholly impossible. But what was improbable was that, if this were the case, she would proclaim it so brazenly and with such

cynicism. Who, then, was it? . . . who among all the tenants deserved those contemptuous epithets? The old cashier tried to turn his thoughts from the question, but it haunted him. He told himself that not infrequently such things occurred, and that the world would not come to an end because of them, and that Mme. Diamant who was, in her small sphere, absolutely omniscient, no doubt knew many people who could justly be described this way. Well, then, what of it? But still his uneasy sensitiveness persisted that it was no accident that she had pronounced those words at such a time, at the very moment when he was passing. It was intended as an insult, an insult quite as pointless and stupid as it was coarse. Besides he could never be in such a plight for the very good reason that he was in no position to be deceived. This, of course, Mme. Diamant did not know, and if she had been told, would, no doubt, have refused to believe it. Still, if that was what she had meant, she was casting suspicion on one who was far above it, and her spitefulness made her guilty of a horrible slander. It was so base, in fact, that M. Charibot persuaded himself that he must have been mad to think of it, and that in seeking to repudiate it, he would be as guilty as Mme. Diamant. But all the same he was troubled. All morning as he went through his mechanical duties he heard that coarse, loud, angry voice repeating:

"Under his nose, my dear . . . the poor fool . . . right under his very nose. . . ." The words twisted like snakes in his imagination and suspicions prodded his thoughts and rode on his imagination like horrible incubi. When he returned at noon to enjoy the chops with sauce Robert and the *pease à la française* that Mechin, the caterer, had sent over for his lunch, he did not climb the stairs with his usual joyful zest, and he did not, as usual, run up two stairs at a time and reach his fourth floor breathless and perspiring. Instead he climbed them slowly. A cloud of anguish had completely drowned the radiance of his soul. He had entirely convinced himself that Mme. Diamant had not had the remotest intention of alluding to him when she had spat out that confounded string of words. But his suffering was incontrollable and unending. For the

first time he faced the reality that a man's happiness may make him odious to his fellow creatures and that such happiness must be concealed as though it were a crime, a crime that, if discovered, one might be punished for. . . . But, still . . . he knew that it had not concerned him.

Then when he found himself face to face with his companion, and saw again the friendly smiling face and the calm, clear gaze of her luminous eyes, his anxiety turned to anger and remorse—anger against the woman whose chance words had destroyed his peace of mind, and remorse for his own guilt in having supposed for a moment that the words were aimed at him, and for his cowardice in not calling Mme. Diamant to account for the slander, since he had admitted the treacherous thought that they might refer to him. The young woman saw that Charibot was greatly perturbed and that he was trying to conceal the fact. She asked him:

"What's wrong this morning? . . . Did something at the office annoy you?"

"No, no," the cashier answered hastily. "What makes you ask? Everything went beautifully."

"I didn't think you looked as cheerful as usual."

"The fact is, I have a lot of work just now," Charibot said shamefacedly, "You understand how it is . . . with our going away and all that. I have to go over all my accounts before I can turn them over to my substitute. . . . It's no little job. . . . People have no idea . . . but don't worry . . . everything will be done in plenty of time. . . . We have our tickets and seats reserved. We'll go just as we planned and we'll have a good time, I promise you that."

Mathilde, reassured, let the matter drop, and M. Charibot looked at her adoringly, his eyes bright with emotion. In what close harmony they were when the slightest shadow that clouded his happiness was not unnoticed by her. How tender and solicitous she was. . . . Ah, if he could only spend his life at her side, not as merely a friend or, so to speak, as a neighbor, but united to her, his being so inextricably fused with hers that the two of them would be as

if melted into one common being and flame by the grace of love, and gratitude, and trust. But that was the unattainable dream of a hungry heart.

Until nightfall a battle waged in the mind of the stricken man. He had decided to refrain from thinking of the incident of the morning and not to concern himself with what manifestly was not his business. He kept this resolution and did not intentionally consider the matter again. But behind the visible and conscious field of his thought, in those far-away and obscure places of his being that could not be controlled, he felt that there was still being waged a battle between his doubts and his certainties, and that he had no power to intervene and reconcile these indefatigable adversaries. The battle was still raging when he started on his homeward way at ten minutes of six. He decided abruptly to dismiss the whole business and settle it once and for all by going directly to Mme. Diamant and asking her to whom she had referred. He drew comfort from this resolution. It gave him a feeling of serenity, so that, as he reached the house, he was able to dismiss the whole matter as absurd and almost ridiculous, and decided not to cater to the stupid effrontery of a servant by seeking an explanation.

With a firm step he strolled into the hall. The lodge was open and Mme. Diamant was seated at a table peeling onions. Charibot glanced at her scornfully and, with exaggerated courtesy, lifted his hat. He wished and intended to ascend to his room immediately, but his will was as weak and wavering as a candle in the wind and he turned from the steps without being able to control the impulse that moved him toward the lodge. Now he was standing in the doorway and Mme. Diamant, her knife poised in her left hand, was looking at him. He heard his own choked voice, soft as the echo of an echo:

"I'd like . . . it was about this morning . . . you said something . . . it was when I was going out . . ."

Mme. Diamant was secretly very delighted. "I don't understand what you are asking me and what you want to know."

"You know," Charibot stammered. . . . "You were

speaking of some one . . . you said he was . . . you must understand . . . I know very well it was not I . . . I'm not worried, but all the same . . . don't you see! . . . call it curiosity if you like . . . but I'd like to know who it was. . . ."

"My poor gentleman . . . if you must have it . . . I don't know whose business it is if it's not yours . . . I'm sure I can't help it either . . . I may only be the concierge, but I'm right on the spot and I can't help what I see. Can I? When you told me a lady relation of yours was coming to live with you I didn't say anything. Why should I? But that didn't prevent my thinking plenty. After all, I'm no chicken . . . I've got my eyes open . . . still it was your business. . . . But all the same she ought to be grateful to you. . . . She wouldn't find many men would treat her the way you do. . . . If I'd been in her shoes and a man did as much for me, I'd respect him . . . yes, I would . . . but she . . . what do you think she cares about you. . . . There's that grocer's boy who lives up on the servants' floor, a loafer who's been out of a job for a month. . . . I don't like such ugly goings on. . . . It makes me sick, if you want to know it. . . . I try to hold my tongue and mind my own business, but I just can't keep quiet when I see such brass. . . ."

M. Charibot fully intended to answer in a tone full of cold hauteur, "You lie, you abominable hag . . . you hideous old shrew . . . you lie." Doubtless he did shout this out with all his might in the secret places of his soul, but Mme. Diamant never knew it, as no sound came from his coffee-colored lips. With uncertain steps he backed away and dragged himself up the stairs, clinging to the banister. He felt that each step pushed him farther into a horrible abyss. He spent a frightful evening and still more frightful night. On the plea of a sick headache and nausea he went to bed and lay there, utterly crushed, filled with longing to give voice to his agony and despair, and unable to sleep. The time dragged by, slow and ponderous as a weed-clogged wave. Then Mathilde, considerate and sympathetic as always, came in bringing a cup of broth and with pretty tenderness stood by the bed

while he drank it. The next morning he told her that, although he felt better, he was not entirely well.

"You certainly need a rest," she said. "It's a good thing we're going away soon."

A good thing! She thought it a good thing! She had said so . . . then of course the concierge must have lied. . . . If she had been telling the truth, Mathilde would certainly not have been so enthusiastic about a trip that could have been so easily avoided. She could have found a pretext to do so, and she hadn't. Here, certainly, was conclusive proof of her innocence, if such were necessary . . . but he didn't need such evidence. . . . How could he have suspected her. . . . He only needed to look at her to feel utterly secure and confident. These thoughts sustained Charibot during the morning. The conflict was no longer in the obscure regions of his consciousness. No, all his powers of logic and rationalization were now hotly engaged, like the gods of Homer, on the side of righteousness, and ready to bring it support and assistance. But even this power could not wrest a final victory from the enemies that assailed him.

At two o'clock, when he started back to work, Charibot only went down half a flight of stairs. Between the fourth and third floors there was a small closet which served as a store room, and it was here that the cashier concealed himself and waited, full of anxiety and gloomy forebodings. Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed when he heard steps creaking on the stairs coming from one of the upper floors. Breathing with difficulty, while his heart seemed as though it must burst his breast, he peeked through the door which was slightly ajar. A big, fair-haired youth was standing before his apartment; he coughed loudly once. Almost immediately the door opened, the dark hallway swallowed up the visitor, then the door closed. . . . The side of righteousness had lost and a myriad of satanic imps leered at him and prodded his consciousness with sharp barbs.

It was neither his intelligence nor his will, for both were completely dazed, that directed Charibot's course and enabled him to perform actions for which he could never

have summoned sufficient resolution. In fact he moved in a complete stupor.

For perhaps half an hour he remained motionless. Either he did not suffer at all or he was unaware of his suffering, as a man who has fallen from a great height will lie without realizing the agony of his broken limbs. He was waiting. . . . Why? He never knew nor did he try to think. It was only slowly that life crept back into his numbed body and consciousness to his mind.

Back in his apartment again he crossed the room and stumbled into an armchair, dropped his head in his hands, and burst into sobs. He was sobbing so violently and was so lost in his grief that he did not hear the light scrape of Mathilde's feet on the floor. She was moving slowly, in the toils of a storm of emotion in which perplexity as to her next move, hatred of her lover, and annoyance at her own folly were mingled. She wanted to weep over the ruin and collapse of all her schemes. She gave occasional deep sighs that Charibot did not notice, but he started violently as she approached and raised his haggard face to hers. He stared at her stupidly, his visage as clay white as that of a cadaver, his shoulders shaking, tears rolling down his cheeks onto his beard. Humbly she stood before him, her head hanging in utter distress and shame; so totally different from the woman that he had just seen that he could not reconcile the two images. Beyond the nightmare of what he had just witnessed, he saw her again as she had always appeared to him . . . full of charm and sweetness. . . . She spoke, and it was the voice he knew . . . the fresh, limpid voice . . . but it quavered slightly. . . . She spoke in a tone of utter humility and dejection.

"Well . . . I'll go now. After what's happened there's nothing else to do . . . I don't want you to remember me like that . . . I'll never forget all you've done for me. . . . What happened just now was an accident . . . I can't explain it . . . any way . . . what's the use? . . . I'd only hurt you if I stayed . . . so to go is the best thing I can do. . . ."

"You're going . . . to leave me?" M. Charibot stam-

mered. It was the last and the most severe blow of all he had endured. He choked out another sob and cried out desperately, "If you go . . . if you go, I'll . . . kill myself. . . ."

With a violent shock of joy she realized that the game which she had considered lost was still in her hands. By a supreme effort she thrust away the triumph of the knowledge, and cried out to him as from the inmost depths of her being, "No. No, you shan't kill yourself . . . you kill yourself because of me? . . . never! . . . I am the one who ought to die of shame . . . No . . . no, you must live . . . you will find some other woman . . . one who will be worthy of you . . . let me go . . . forget me! . . ."

He spoke aloud and not directly to her, scarcely aware of the words that betrayed the confusion that engulfed him. "Why did you do it? . . . Why? . . . I loved you so . . . I respected . . . I worshiped you . . . yes, I put you next to God. . . . Why?"

"I don't know myself," she answered vehemently, shutting her eyes. "No, I don't. I swear it by everything holy. . . . When I think of it, it nearly drives me mad. . . . But can't you understand . . . one isn't always responsible for what one does. . . . I'm young . . . and you never touched me . . . oh, I'm not blaming you . . . on the contrary . . . but a time comes . . . something happens to you . . . you really don't understand it yourself . . . and it's all over now. . . . Oh, if you had only wanted me it wouldn't have happened . . . but to live so close to you . . . to the man I loved . . . there's no harm in telling you now . . . I seemed to be out of my mind for a while . . . I couldn't bear any more, so I . . . I didn't even feel that I was deceiving you . . . I wasn't deceiving you, since you didn't want me . . . you wouldn't take me . . . that's the whole truth. . . . No . . . you must let me go. . . ."

"You can't go," Charibot shouted hoarsely. "You can't! I can't let you! I can't let you. . . . I can't . . . I couldn't live without you. . . ."

She shook her head. "No, I'd better go. Now you think you can understand what happened, you're trying to make excuses for me . . . but later on . . . men are all alike.

You couldn't really forgive me. You couldn't forget. . . ."

He burst out again. "Stay . . . I forgive you everything . . . I'll forget everything. . . . It was my fault. . . . I see it . . . I tell you I forgive . . ."

"I can't," she answered with decision. "You despise me. I'd rather go back to being poor. But to have you hate me . . . I couldn't bear it. . . ." She felt a little ashamed when she realized that she was playing on his emotions as the sharp, quick fingers of a master musician play on a stringed instrument.

"Mathilde," the poor man blubbered despairingly, "what can I say to make you believe me? . . . If only I dared . . . If I dared . . . Mathilde . . . my love . . . will you share my life? . . . will you take my name? . . . Would I ask you if I despised you? . . . Will you marry me? . . ."

He looked at her anxiously as she remained silent. His face was distorted and drawn by the suspense.

"Do you swear," she said at last, "that you will forget what has happened . . . just now . . . when I was free . . . before I belonged to you?"

"I swear it . . . oh, I swear it. . . . Do not refuse me!"

She drooped as though her resistance were overcome. "I ought to go and I haven't the strength . . . I've loved you too long . . . I will be your wife, since it is what you wish. . . . And I thank God for what has happened since it has brought us together. . . ."

And then Anthelme Charibot, sobbing afresh, fell on his knees, and Mathilde Bécherelle, with mingled feelings of pity and triumph, gazed on the old man who groveled before her, half sobbing, half laughing, kissing her hands with moist and quivering lips.

THE DAY OF THE GRAND PRIX

By PIERRE BENOIT

(From *Demain*)

“WHAT is the matter with you, Medjidie? Be quiet, you dirty little animal.” The little yellow dog commenced howling more loudly.

“Tell me, Ioufik, why is he barking like this?”

“He has been like that for two days, Mr. Lacaze,” answered the young servant.

He added: “I think that he has smelled the Tchètès.” Quartermaster Lacaze frowned.

“You come from Kery-Kan,” continued Ioufik, “you should have met some of them on the road.”

“Met whom?”

“The Tchètès, of course.”

“Get off with your Tchètès,” said Lacaze roughly.

“No? That is funny. Perhaps you did not recognize them.”

“Do you think I am going to take lessons from you?”

“Ah! it is not so easy. You have not been in the country long. I, who was born here, and am a Mussulman, I am sometimes mistaken. A good man who guards his goats, a blind man who stretches out his hand. Who could think of doubting them? Men like you, mounted and armed, they let pass of course. But if it is a question of an isolated traveler, or even of an automobile, suddenly a rifle is raised by the arm of this shepherd or this blind man. Then it is a fact that you have not met any of them?”

“Do you want me to pull your ears, you young monkey?”

Ioufik prudently retired.

“What can I do for you, Mr. Lacaze?”

NOTE: “Tchètès” is the name given to the Turkish and Kurdish irregulars who for five years have made life hard for our troops on the northern frontier of Syria.

"Where is Father Augustin?"

"He has just gone down to the village to see a little sick girl. He will be back soon."

"There is no one here?"

"Yes, there is Father Etienne."

"Where is he?"

"There he is."

Father Etienne came out of one of the plastered clay cells in the inner part of the encircling walls of the convent. He was an old priest, very tall and very thin. He was wearing sabots, a colonial cloak contemporary with Sergeant Bobillot, and a blue apron over his cotton robe. He came forward holding up this apron by the two lower corners.

"Well, my father, what have you there?"

"Oh! pardon, Mr. Lacaze. I did not see you. What have I here? Eight darling little turkeys just hatched. Look at them."

The quartermaster cast an eye on the apron. "Oh!" said he. "How ugly they are."

The Trappist closed his apron with an offended air. "What do you think they are going to look like at their age? You will not say that in a fortnight."

"In a fortnight," murmured Lacaze, "evidently I shall not say that." He continued in his natural tone: "And Father Augustin? I wish to speak to him."

"He is coming back. In the meantime let us go into the divan. Ioufik will bring us some coffee."

"Coffee? Hum! I should prefer something else, something cooler. We are thirsty. We came from Kery-Kan in one stage."

"Some wine, then?"

"We prefer that. What do you say, Vieux? What do you say, Sylvestre?" said he to the soldiers who accompanied him.

"You bet," said the two horsemen.

"All right," said the old man, "I will go to the cellar at once."

"Ah!" said Vieux, "I see Father Augustin at the bottom of the hill. He is coming up."

The monastery of Djermak consisted of three or four brick buildings constructed on the summit of a little "tell." They were entirely inclosed by a wall about twelve feet high that gave the whole place the aspect of a fortress. This formation was neither due to chance nor fancy: the convent had, in fact, to sustain many sieges, particularly each time that it served as a place of refuge to Armenians being massacred in the neighborhood.

The country round about presented a curious mixture of rocky formations, brushland and marshes. To the north, the heights of the Killis region were drowned in a gray mist. To the south, far away, the Antische lake glistened under the sun like a tin plate. Over the whole there was a heavy and disturbing atmosphere. The vegetation, if too deep a green in such a heat, indicated the dangerous presence of stagnant water, mosquitoes and fever.

Father Etienne returned with a bottle in each hand. "Will you not come in?"

"We prefer to stay outside, you know. We imagine there is a little air."

The non-commissioned officer touched glasses with his men. During this time the priest himself gave the horses a drink. He patted them from their necks to their flanks like a connoisseur. "It is true," said Lacaze, "you also served in the cavalry?"

"That does not date from yesterday," said the Trappist.

"Where?"

"In the African light cavalry."

"Here is Father Augustin," said Vieux.

Father Augustin exercised the function of superior in the Djermak monastery in the place of the real superior who had died more than a year ago, and to whom there was no hurry, in high places, to appoint a successor. Wretched Djermak monastery! Two French priests, three native brothers, and the little servant, Ioufik! It had, however, a glorious past. As a fact, it suffered from the political and military instability of this region, the contested frontier between Turkey and Syria. To reconstitute it the end of this uncertainty was awaited.

For the moment, Father Etienne and Father Augustin

remained alone to struggle in the midst of innumerable cares that fell on two priests in a country at once assailed by poverty, brigandage, war and malaria.

Their nearest French neighbors were the Spahis of the Kery-Kan fort, about thirty kilometers from Djermak.

"O Lacaze," exclaimed Father Augustin, a little man of about fifty years, as jovial and round as Father Etienne was dry and taciturn, "how pleased I am to see you! And what good wind?" . . .

"The wind!" said the non-commissioned officer, pointing to his forehead covered with drops of sweat.

"Have you taken anything?"

"Yes. But the more one drinks, the more thirsty and hot one becomes."

He remained standing, turning and re-turning his helmet with a troubled air.

"Come into the divan with me," said Father Augustin, who suddenly understood that the quartermaster wished to speak to him in private.

They went into a rather dark room furnished with small tables inlaid with rough mother-of-pearl, and benches covered with some cushions. Little Ioufik had followed them. Here and there he whisked his brush of feathers and tapped the cushions.

Waiting to be alone with the father, Lacaze had picked up a paper from the table. "Oh!" said he, "a copy dated May 24, and here we are only June the 9th. You cannot much complain about the mail."

"This week we have, as it so happens, had it earlier than usual."

"Let us see the Paris news. Session of the House of Representatives, of the Senate . . . all night. Theatrical events. Horse racing. . . . Ah! the Grand Prix will be run this year on the twelfth of June . . . in three days."

Shrugging his shoulders, Father Augustin showed an absolute indifference without bad feeling.

"Is there anything new?" he commenced.

He stopped. With a look the non-commissioned officer indicated the little servant.

"Ioufik," he ordered, "go and bring us some coffee."

Ioufik went out slowly.

"Well, what is it?"

"Nothing good, my father."

"What?"

"An order arrived this morning . . ."

"Ah!" said the father. "I understand. You are going."

Lacaze bowed his head.

"The order does not come from us, you know. Under the circumstances and the more and more pressing danger from the Turks, regulars and irregulars, it is true that it has been decided to withdraw a part of the Aleppo-Alexandretta line more to the south for the moment, says the order. The El-Hamman post retires on Katma, and our post on Baïlan."

"On Baïlan, on Baïlan," repeated the father. "Do you know that that is serious?"

The non-commissioned officer did not answer.

"Has not this decision been taken somewhat hurriedly?"

"My father," said Lacaze, with emotion, "believe that quite to the contrary as I know they have waited until the last minute. Quantities of infantry have been removed by the aviators. On the other hand, our spies report on all sides the presence of Tchètès more numerous than flies. All that tends to cut the El Hamman-Kery-Kan line. We can do nothing in our present positions. At Baïlan it will be another thing. We shall have the mountains and, in case of need, the guns of the fleet. Besides, I repeat, the order says, 'For the moment.'"

"It is all very fine," said the father, "but this moment will suffice for the massacre of all the Christians here."

Lacaze was about to reply but Ioufik came in with the coffee. He remained silent. When they were alone again, the Trappist, smiling, said to the non-commissioned officer: "You do not seem to like Ioufik very much."

"I confess that I do not like the looks of his face. And do you think that his behavior escapes my attention? He spends his time listening at what goes on behind the doors."

"He is curious like all children of his age. But I assure you that he is a good boy. He is very devoted to us."

"Hum! You will excuse me if I consider him amongst the objects you will have to leave here."

"To leave here?"

"Yes! That is what I commenced to explain to you. Surely you did not think that we had been sent here to pay our respects to your reverence and to leave you to do your best?"

"Your instructions are . . ."

"Yes, my father; more than instructions, an order. We evacuate Kery-Kan the day after tomorrow in the morning at the latest. And I have the order to take you away with me this very morning if possible."

"Dear Mr. Lacaze," quietly said Father Augustin, "do me the honor of paying me a little attention. I have been here for fourteen years. Father Etienne has been here thirty-one years. Why do you wish us to go away today?"

"Because, up to the present, you have not been given the order to do so. We must admit that those who gave this order know better what they are doing than you or I."

"It is the military authorities who have taken this decision?"

"Naturally."

"I am not bound by them."

"You are French, you are bound by them."

"Well, suppose that is so. They issue orders for us to go, to abandon these miserable people?"

"No, my father, the order includes the people of whom you speak. About what is the population of the Djermak village, in your opinion?"

"Twenty Christian families. About a hundred persons."

"Well, we are instructed to protect the removal of these people and others to Alexandretta."

"It means ruin for these poor people."

"Listen, my father, it has nothing to do with me. If they do not leave this evening, tomorrow, or at the latest the day after tomorrow, they will be more than ruined, they will be dead."

"Is your information concerning the enemy's advance certain?"

"Certain."

The priest reflected for a moment. "Very well, I will obey," he said.

"Fine," said Lacaze. "Now it is necessary to proceed with method and rapidity. We must allow ten hours for the population of the village—old men, women, children, able-bodied men driving their cattle and sheep before them—to cover the thirty kilometers that separate Djermak from Kery-Kan. It is nearly midday. Do what is necessary so that the old and the lame form the first convoy that will leave this evening about four o'clock. I will accompany them and requisition on the road all that may help to carry the most fatigued. As to the others . . . hulloa, what is he coming for again?"

Ioufik had just shown his nose at the door. "It is to know whether I must give the soldiers' horses some barley."

"Give them some and leave us at once," said the father.

"I told you," said Lacaze, "that he is spying on us. The Tchêtès are not so stupid as not to have some of their people already in the village, I could bet. Where was I? Oh! yes. As to the others, those who can make the journey in one stage must spend the night collecting their belongings and animals—everything they can carry away without running the chance of delaying the convoy. Leave tomorrow morning at daybreak so as to be at Kery-Kan by noon. Ah! this will be a nice job. For you must understand that you are not the only ones. There are twenty villages that will be removed in the same way. Great God, to think that the guns of the armistice should have ended all this dirty business only to see it recommence worse than ever before, two years later! Men are filthy brutes, my father."

"It is certain that they cannot do much without divine grace," murmured Father Augustin, who, notwithstanding his habitual good humor, had always had a weakness for the doctrine of the Bishop of Ypres.

The pitiful exodus of the refugees commenced a few hours later. To dwell upon such scenes is too easy an effect for a narrator. He will limit himself to stating

that by leaving the first under such conditions, Quartermaster Lacaze was far from having chosen the least unpleasant task.

The following morning, at daybreak, those remaining in the village of Djermak were massed in front of the monastery door. Vieux and Sylvestre endeavored to put some order into this rabble.

"We have not forgotten anything?" asked Father Augustin of Father Etienne.

"My father," said he, "I wish to speak to you."

"Speak to me? You can tell me on the way what you have to say."

"That is exactly what will not be possible for me. My father, I beg your pardon for speaking at so late a time. I required time for reflection and I can say that the night has brought me counsel. I wish to stay here."

The two priests looked at each other gravely. "My father," said Father Augustin, "I have received an order and I obey it. Why do you not do the same?"

"It is your personal duty," replied Father Etienne. "You have to insure the safety of these poor people. Your presence is at the same time necessary and sufficient. Then you have not been here as long as I have. It is something to quit a place where one has lived for more than thirty years. It is useless to say that if you order me to go I shall follow you. I only ask you not to give me this order. It would be the first that I should unwillingly obey. It seems to me that, you going and I staying, the Trappists of Djermak will have done their duty. Finally, I have work to do here."

Father Augustin shrugged his shoulders. "Work!"

"The vines in the first place, my father. Then the farmyard. Eight little turkeys have just been hatched and next week I expect a lot of little ducks."

"The Tchêtes will before long, in their own way, take care of your little turkeys and ducks."

"Quite so," said the old man with gentle obstinacy. "Whilst, if I am there, they will not harm them. You will allow me to remind you, my father, that I have been here for thirty-one years. I have passed through epochs

agreed to be the most critical, the massacres of Adana, of Kiabékir, when Christian meat was exposed in the butchers' stores. Never have I been worried. It is possibly due to the intervention of Providence. But then I should show little gratitude for this intervention by abandoning my post before a peril that nothing can foretell as more dreadful than those of which I have spoken."

"What can I say?" murmured Father Augustin.

"Nothing, unless to wish me good luck just as I wish you the same and an early return. You know the country well enough to admit that what I have said is quite correct: if I stay there are ninety chances to one hundred that the monastery will be respected. If I go, there are one hundred chances to one hundred that not one stone will be found standing. Of us two it is only right that one should go—it is right that the other should stay."

"Go, then," said Father Augustin, "and I will stay."

"My father," said the other, "you forget that you do not know the Turk. If I did not know the Turk, I would go. Come. Time is pressing, bid me *au revoir*."

"Ah!" said Father Augustin, "what a pity we have not a superior. He would soon have found a way . . ."

"He would have spoken as I have done. Let us embrace, my father. I am sure that you will return before long. Then, arriving at the bottom of the hill and seeing smoke arise from the chimney of the convent, you will know, better than now, that your fears on my account were vain and that I was right."

"My father," called out Vieux, who had succeeded in getting some appearance of order into his crowd, "we shall be late."

"Medjidie," called Father Etienne, "come here." He tied a string on the little yellow dog's collar. "Now, my father take him with you. He is difficult to keep quiet. He has the habit of barking unreasonably at newcomers. I am afraid he would get me into trouble and himself as well. Take him away."

"Is every one present?" asked Sylvestre.

"And Ioufik," inquired Father Augustin, "where is this infernal youngster?"

"He may have gone on," said Father Etienne.

Remaining alone, the old man commenced by lighting his pipe. Then, grabbing a broom, he started sweeping from the entrance to the convent the rubbish that had been left there by the refugees. That took him all morning to do. Around him, under the clouded sun, the hills appeared to be deserted; a heavy silence reigned over the dead country.

Father Etienne was not impressionable. He nevertheless felt the necessity of putting some life into this isolation. An old African air came to him, that he commenced to hum:

"Happy he who dies in battle
Under his flag, near his old friends."

"The flag," said he to himself. "I wonder whether the rats have eaten ours?"

He went to the sacristy. In a box there was a large tri-color flag, presented to the monastery, a dozen years earlier, by the officers of a French battleship who were passing through by way of Alexandretta.

He went onto the terrace of the convent and hoisted it on the pole which was there for the purpose. It hung, inert, against the staff.

"This evening at six o'clock there will be a little air and it will float."

He came down from the terrace. A sort of happiness made his old legs more agile than usual. He gained the cellars, lighted a candle and, having moved a barrel, uncovered an excavation from which he took with great precaution some curious objects, objects which, under the yellow light, looked like large, shining oranges. They were hand grenades, which had been carefully collected during the retreat of the Germano-Turkish army. He replaced the first barrel and moved away a second one. There, there were some rifles. He took two. Behind a third barrel he found some cartridges and a bugle.

He placed the cord of the bugle around his neck, passed the rifle straps on each of his shoulders and put the car-

tridges in his apron, caught up at the corners as he had done for the little turkeys. Thus equipped, he ascended to the monastery courtyard.

The encircling wall, which was very thick, had been repaired two years earlier. It constituted an all the more redoubtable obstacle to an enemy outside as it had to be defended on only two sides. The other two overlooked a perpendicular ravine which it was impossible to scale.

A certain number of loopholes had been let into the walls with much art. Father Etienne deposited one of his rifles by the side of each of those over the gateway. At the feet of them he placed a little heap of cartridges. "In any event I shall not be the one to fire first," he murmured. He examined the bolts of the door. They were formidable. It would have required cannon to smash them. The cow and the goats of the convent sought their provender outside; he brought them in and closed the door.

When he had terminated his inspection, the first stars commenced to shine in the heavens. Satisfied with his day, he took a stool and went up onto the terrace. He sat down and lighted a second pipe. His tranquillity and well-being were so profound that, thinking of the miserable inhabitants of this country who at the moment were the prey of ambushes of the night and the road, he accused himself of selfishness.

Suddenly he heard from the outside of the entrance gate a strange scratching. Slightly leaning over the wall, he looked. But it was too dark. He saw nothing. He went down with great care. The scratching was continued more vigorously. A little plaintive whining answered his "Who is there?"

It was Medjidie, who had broken his string and returned.

The following day was still calmer and quieter. Early on Sunday morning as Father Etienne was seated on the terrace in the same place, taking his provision of fresh air for the day, Medjidie suddenly barked. The priest just had time to lower his head. A buzzing like that of a hornet, a thud made the plaster of the wall crumble, and almost immediately the detonation of rifles was heard close by in the valley.

Under cover of a rock, Irak Bey followed with a troubled eye and his field-glasses the attempts of his men to take the monastery.

He was a man of medium height, supple in a very elegant khaki costume and brown leather belt. He wore the Kemalist *kalpak*. Passing from the Constantinople school, an officer on the staff of Djemal Pacha during the war, he was now the incontestable chief of the Tchêtes of Aleppo and Alexandretta. It was owing to *maladresse* on the part of our government concerning him that he was thrown into the arms of the Turks. For a year he had killed many of our people. He was too civilized to appear cruel. He was clever enough to disappear when he considered that the moment had come to allow his subordinates to protect themselves with the help of a few atrocities.

"Nour," he called.

Nour, a sort of giant brute, came.

"Nour, has Harsan succeeded?"

"Harsan, your Excellency, has just been mortally wounded."

"That makes the seventh since this morning," grumbled Irak Bey, "for a stupid affair that should not have lasted a quarter of an hour. Who is the idiot who commenced firing when it was elementary to enter the convent with arms on the shoulder?"

"It was Djewad, your Excellency. He, too, has been killed just as . . ."

"Hush," said Irak Bey, a finger on his lips. "What is that now?"

Astonishment was painted on the faces of the two men. From the convent came a sound vibrating through the sunburnt air. A bugle was sounding its triumphant notes.

Irak Bey struck his leggins with his stick. "The child, where is the child? Go and look for him." Less than a minute afterwards, Nour brought the miserable little Ioufik.

"Do you hear that bugle, son of a dog?" asked Irak Bey. Ioufik trembled all over.

"Your Excellency . . ."

"You hear it? Well, listen to me. I have something

better to do than to lose a whole day besieging this hovel. I shall leave Nour here with eight men. That will be sufficient to take the monastery. You swore to us that it was defended by only an old man, whilst bullet and bugle calls pour from it as if an entire company were entrenched there. If then our people, when they enter, find more than one man, instead of the agreed reward you will receive on the bottom of your feet as many strokes as there had been promised piasters."

"It is not my fault if you have lost some men, Excellency, nor if you run the chance of losing more," said Ioufik, who had somewhat regained his assurance. "If you had listened to me, I would have conducted your men right into the convent courtyard without awakening the suspicions of the old man. Instead of thus acting, the old man was fired on directly he was seen and he was missed. That did not cure your men. There are already seven killed because they insist upon firing in the open instead of following my advice."

"What advice?"

"There are six loopholes in the monastery walls, your Excellency. I pointed out these openings to your sharpshooters. The Frenchman is forced to appear at them. Let each of six soldiers select one of the loopholes and a seventh shake his *kalpak* above a rock. The old man will fire and at the same time each of the watchers. At the third or fourth time you will get him."

"This child is more intelligent than all of you," said Irak Bey. "Nour, keep him near you and carry out to the letter what he has said. Good-bye. When the convent is taken you will leave a guard of four men and you will rejoin me with the rest at Kery-Kan."

"And the Frenchman, when we shall have taken the convent, should he still be alive?" With a tired gesture, Irak Bey intimated to Nour that he had not the time to enter into such details.

Everything passed as Ioufik had foreseen. Towards five o'clock the fusillade suddenly ceased. Nour, three times raising his *kalpak* in the air, could not draw another

shot. The Tchètès waited for the night to be more advanced. Then, making a short ladder, they scaled the walls. Near the loophole on the left they found Father Etienne leaning against a pile of enormous beams brought there several days before for repairs to the roof. He had a bullet in the shoulder. By his side was the body of little Medjidie, killed by the first shot.

Nour took the time to feed and give drink to his men and animals. Then they galloped away on the tracks of Irak Bey. In conformity with the instructions given by the latter, four Tchètès remained in the monastery. The night was fine. They had lighted a fire in the middle of the courtyard to make some coffee. The sparks flew up glittering in the red shade.

The four men, squatting down, smoked, commenting on the events of the day. Not far away Father Etienne was saying his prayers. In making a slight movement he caused his wound to start bleeding again. He uttered a low sigh.

"Hulloa! it is true he is still there," said one of the guards.

He rose and went towards him. The man who had spoken fingered the end of the priest's rosary. "What is this?" he asked, pointing to the cross that terminated the rosary. "It is your good God, is it not?"

Father Etienne bowed his head.

"You love him very much, I think, your good God?"

"Yes."

"Then you would certainly not be sorry to die in the same way as He did."

"Without a doubt."

"It shall be done as you wish."

Without hurrying, they made a cross with two of the large beams they found there, then, having stripped the old man, they crucified him.

SERGEANT LEBRE

By HENRI BERAUD

(From *Demain*)

DECEMBER 22, 1688, shortly before nightfall, the Lyonnais regiment of the King's infantry entered Landau, their winter quarters. The burgomaster and the prior of the *Abbaye* awaited them in the square. It was snowing. Beneath the leaden sky, the church spire, the cloister and the *Stiftskirche* seemed literally to tremble.

Back of M. de Neuville, the field master, the soldiers floundered about to the music of fife and drums. The horses' iron shoes slipped on the pavement. The rows of companies wavered; one heard a hundred oaths. From house to house a battle song reëchoed from the motley procession, a coarse jest directed towards a window closed in haste by a quarrelsome husband. Men and horses came in succession in the narrow street which led towards the lower quarter of the city, on the bank of the Queich, where the encampment was.

Seven o'clock struck. Night fell as the ammunition wagons passed the drawbridge. The sharp Paladin wind whistled long and lugubriously about them. Then all was silence. The city seemed to disappear in the black overhanging sky. Like a swarm of maddened butterflies, the snowflakes glistened against the window-panes. The contrasting shadows grew darker. A clock struck the hour, penetrating the dark stillness.

It is at this moment that the non-commissioned officers of the Lyonnais regiment give out the soup and place the sentinels for the night. Then they leave camp and make for the heart of the city. Two cooks and a table valet carrying the lanterns and a case of food preceded them from street to street. The quartermaster counted the houses, hesitated. Finally he led his companions into a narrow

alley, past a frozen fountain, and indicating an unpainted door, said:

"That's it."

At the first blow on the knocker, the upper half of the door opened and a woman's head protruded.

"The widow Koerber," the quartermaster demanded.

"Yes, Mr. Sergeant," she replied.

The sergeants entered one by one, the cooks and the table valet. The table was prepared, the pothanger down and the yule log in place. The widow received the Frenchmen amiably.

Blonde and faded, her forehead encircled by corkscrew curls, this devout person gazed with awe at the celebrated Frenchmen, the greatest debauchees in the world.

Of the twelve sergeants one was missing—Merru, nicknamed Male-Mort—who had left at Philippsburg and was to rejoin the regiment at Landau Christmas night. The others settled themselves about the great walnut fire in the low-ceilinged room.

The fire, like a bouquet of red tongues, soon began to brighten the hearth. Wine flowed in the goblets, and the campaigners began to talk among themselves. Their conversation was of nothing but service. It would seem that these men had no past other than that of the regiment: the battle, the stations, their pay, the girls, the revelry, clothes.

The last was as much of a pro-occupation to them as their promotion. At Versailles, the halberd, the pride of all non-commissioned officers, had been suppressed. Already the corporals had lost their short pike. An old sergeant, Nollot, called familiarly Le Grison, who sat down at the table without taking off either his hat or his equipment, said:

"They want our short pikes. M. de Montesquieu has been after them for a long time, ever since we trailed between the Rhine and the low country."

Another sergeant, young, and of jovial aspect, interrupted the veteran, "The staff was in favor of the socket bayonet!"

"You speak very freely, Belle Rose! You hear him,

comrades? That's the way you treat the old ones at present?"

The young man laughed. The old again raised his voice.

"You see this hand, white-beak. I shall pull your nose with it, in less than a minute! Let's bet that I'll make a good job of it."

"Let's bet!" the men cried laughingly.

But the other, who had become scarlet with rage, spoke from the end of the table:

"You've laughed enough, Grison," he cried, knocking with his foot on the floor. "The hand that dares touch this nose had better to fall by the wayside!"

Then he clutched the hilt of his sword.

"Hello, hello! Are you losing your senses, comrades?"

There was a grand tumult. All interposed. The sergeant with gray hair jumped up, overturned his bench, and cried in a hoarse voice:

"To me! The lazy fellow tells me that I had better hold back? To me who has served His Majesty ever since the Lyonnais and Picardie swam across the Douai! To me, comrades, who destroyed Bodegraves, Swammerdan and Niewerbrug! To me, who also saw M. de Turenne die!"

He choked. The other, redder than his stockings, tried to free himself. The pitchers and goblets rolled about the table. From under the low brown joists of the ceiling, a clamor came from eleven soldiers.

In the doorway there stood an officer. He wore a heavy wig and the service belt; his hand rested on the handle of his cane. The high stock rubbed against his chin, accentuating his air of importance. The sergeants recognized him as M. Merlac, captain of the guard.

He entered with a majestic stride, taking in at a glance the disorder in the room. A sergeant, wearing the colors of another regiment, followed him.

"Gentlemen," the captain said in a measured voice, "I bring you a new companion who comes with the post, by the Mayence route, where his old regiment, the Dauphiné met the siege under M. de Dampierre's orders. His name is Lèbre. He is a courageous sergeant. Come in, Lèbre."

The newcomer, who had been waiting outside, came up

the step and entered the room. While the soldiers regarded him curiously M. de Merlac continued:

"As a great favor, Sergeant Lébre obtained permission to serve with the Dauphiné, where he began as a simple recruit. They made him a non-commissioned officer. They have certainly a right good regiment, but, by gad, gentlemen, His Majesty has no better infantry than his brave Lyonnais. That is the reason why Lébre asked for the transfer which has brought him amongst us. I leave it to you, gentlemen, to welcome this brave man royally. Offer him proof of your friendship, but, mind you, no excess!"

The captain cast a last supercilious glance at the table and, with a sweeping gesture of his plumed hat, turned on his heels and regained the darkness of the street.

The new sergeant remained standing near the door. He looked at his new comrades; they looked at him. Lébre was of good height and fair appearance. The shoulders of his tan, blue-revered jerkin were dripping with melting snow. His trousers and stockings were the same as his coat. He wore the usual equipment—pouch, cartridge box, and the leather thong.

He advanced silently, studying each of the sergeants intently, to see if he recognized comrades amongst them. Then he waited, his thin face expressionless. According to custom, Grison, the veteran of the table, spoke.

"Welcome, comrade," he said.

"I will pay, friends," Lébre said, "if you will accept me as one of you."

"Agreed!" the sergeants said in chorus.

Immediately the cooks hastened to put things in order. The eldest, as was the custom, spilled the salt, in sign of great thirst, and said:

"A sergeant's promise is worth German money! At this hour we receive thee and we treat thee as a comrade. Hello! Quartermaster, two *ecus* to the valet."

The valet ran at once to the *auberge*. He returned holding several pointed bottles. They contained the wine of Edenkoben, cold, sweet, which made the heads turn.

At this point the cat and dog fight was forgotten as, with the pretended oaths of war, the sergeant Belle Rose em-

braced his superior, amid the applause of the table. The glasses were filled, the pipes lighted. The ceiling became smoky with tobacco.

Nevertheless every one talked at the same time, except for the newcomer, who replied politely to his neighbor's questions. Arms crossed, he regarded his comrades with the same worried air that they had observed when he entered.

From time to time his neighbor, a sort of colossal rustic, Demarchais, nicknamed Bell Trogne, in sign of good hospitality, gave him resounding slaps on the shoulder. Lèbre supported it with patience. Each moment the noise and agitation increased. In the midst of the tumult Lèbre leaned towards the hospitable friend to ask:

"Are these all of the non-commissioned officers of the Lyonnais?"

"Yes, except the dead whom we left at Mannheim and at Philippsburg."

"All?"

"All."

"No," said a sergeant, Garat, nicknamed Tour d'amour, who from the other side of the table was following the conversation. "Here, Merru, nicknamed Male-Mort, is missing."

"Merru, nicknamed Male-Mort," Lèbre replied in an even tone.

"He counts the dead at Philippsburg," the neighbor answered, "and will rejoin us if God and the Imperials permit him."

"I wish it with all my heart, comrade," Lèbre's tone was low and cold.

"What is the matter with you? You are as white as the drum's skin."

"Nothing, friend, nothing. I am tired."

"Silence," some one said. "Grison is going to sing."

"Silence, silence!"

Embracing his adversary a last time the veteran got up, and standing in the middle of the room, glass in hand, and in a voice still strong, despite twenty years of soldiering and dissipation, he began the song of the naked soldier:

“Ouvrez-nous, la belle hôtesse,
Voici notre bulletin.
Jusques à demain matin,
Logez un peu de jeunesse.
Trois pauvres soldats tous nus
Serent-ils les bienvenus?”

The soldiers emptied their glasses, putting them on the table as they took up the song:

“Trois pauvres soldats tous nus
Serent-ils les bienvenus?”

The voice of the old man became stronger:

“Ne redoutez pas nos armes,
Nature nous les donna,
Et l’amour les façonna,
Pour être de ses gendarmes.
Trois pauvres soldats tous nus
Serent-ils les bienvenus?”

Lébre listened, or seemed to listen. The widow sitting under the mantel threading her distaff, observed the unmasking of this new soldier, melancholic and so different in culture as well as in appearance from the others, who for many months had united under the black ceiling, beside the heavy oak-legged table.

Tanned and weatherbeaten by long marches and exposure to all seasons, this newcomer presented a strange contrast to his new companions. A scar from the temple to the lobe of his right ear was a mute witness of the trials which he had endured. Brave! Without doubt. But for what reason? These other non-commissioned officers had no worries as they sang and drank or they might have discovered that he took a certain morose pleasure in his drinks, whilst his thoughts were far away.

“Je crains d’être ici malade:
Ouvrez belle hardiment;
Si vous n’ouvrez vite ment

J'enfonce la barricade.
Trois pauvres soldats tous nus
Seraient-ils les bienvenus?"

Thus they sang. They stopped for a moment to empty the bottles. Nine o'clock, the retreat sounded. At the first call Lèbre got up, grabbed his hat, and:

"Comradès," he said, "I'm going to bed. Your reception has filled me with joy and pride. I invite you all to come here to supper on Christmas eve, after the mass. Good-night to you. As to me, the trip has tired me. *Adieu.*"

They all wanted to shake hands. He complied willingly enough, without losing any of his worried air; so that Grison, putting his hand on Lèbre's shoulder, cried in the guise of good-bye:

"Friend, I baptize you: Sombre Accueil. That will be your nickname in the regiment. Have you anything to say?"

"Nothing," Lèbre answered. "Good-bye."

II

MIDNIGHT MASS

"ORDER: The Lyonnais companies will assemble and go together to the church, marching to the right and left, and in threes. The companies by the officers of the week will march outside of the right flank. The fife and drums will be at the head of the regiment. The companies will divide in the nave of the church.

"Three chosen men will be taken from the guard, and placed on either side of the altar, and facing it. The commander of the guards will command the presentation of arms at the moment of the elevation. The fifes during the mass will play religious airs, in conformity with the sanctity of the place."

Three sergeants read this notice, placed at the camp gates, back of the sentinels. The lantern went out with the heavy wind.

It was a typical German night, full of cantankerous sighs and frightful voices. All the Landau weathercocks creaked at the same time and the torches about the tents and pavilions shed dense, weird shadows.

The beating of drums awakened the camp, then the city. The cloister and the Stiftskirche bells began to ring. At a thousand windows of gold the wind seemed to blow out the candles. The last lanterns danced and went out in the collegiate church, as the regiment formed in line. Without a word, to the beating of the drums, they started for the midnight mass.

Lébre gave over his half company to his corporals and left the church before the amen, to run to the usual lodgings. He was anxious, he said, that nothing should be missing at the supper that he was offering. He was feverish, like one obsessed. Knowing the rules, he fixed the places according to the length of service in the regiment.

A panoply of halberds, swords, and cartridge boxes, having a cuirass for center, covered the wall. When all was ready Lébre sat down silently; his head resting on the table, he awaited his guests. They arrived in small groups; each, according to usage, brought a little of the straw which covered the church floor. Two torches illuminated the table. The cook turned the spit before a fagot fire, while the perfume of rosin mingled with the appetizing odor of the duck.

They ate, they drank. A sergeant nicknamed Belle Rose, who wore a long queue and the white bandoleer, enlivened the company. An old story teller, he spoke with the Dauphiné accent, and told of a hundred adventures where his sagacity and presence of mind had excelled. They were only stories of army posts, of pints of wine, pots of cider, then he got up to imitate the recruits at exercise: "*Piquiers*, gunners! the gun high! . . . take the cartridge! . . . take the fine powder; prime . . . ram . . . take off the bayonet! . . . Fire! . . ."

They all laughed heartily. The wine flowed. Lébre forced himself to laugh with the others. But he glanced from time to time towards the door, as though he expected it to open for an absent comrade.

"Friend," the veteran of the non-commissioned officers, whom they called Grison, cried suddenly, "friend, do you expect some one to come?"

"Perhaps."

"This evening?"

"Who knows?"

Lébre passed his rough soldier hand across his brow, took his glass and, raising it with a quick gesture, he said:

"Drink, let us drink through the entire night, that the dawn may find us seated! If it pleases you, I will now tell a story. It is my own, the story of an unhappy soldier whose heartache is perhaps at its end."

"Will it be a long tale?" Belle Rose asked.

"As you will," Lébre replied. "I can talk until the light of day. I will stop when . . ." He left the sentence unfinished and, throwing a glance of somber fire towards the door, he emptied his glass at one gulp.

"Yes," he continued, "it can be prolonged late enough in the night if you, my comrades, will suffer me to tell the entire truth. On my word, you will not regret your time."

"All right," Grison said, "on the condition that you give drink to more than our ears."

"Wine," Lébre cried, "the pots filled to the brim. Run, boys, here is my purse." He threw it to them. Then, putting his sword across his knees and turning towards the listening companions in arms, he began in a strong, clear voice:

"Comrades, here is. . . .

III

"I was born at Bonce, near the Verpilière, in Dauphiné. I was a peasant before becoming a soldier. You other city people hardly know our country rustics. You live at the cabaret and at the public house. Lackeys, chair carriers, bad boys and house-breakers, you are easy prey to the merchants of men. A pint, two pints, the sound of a drum, a girl to caress, birds roasted on the point of a sword, and you have my blockhead enrolled! Reprove me, if I do not speak the truth. . . .

"We villagers do not bite with a very good appetite at the recruiters' decoy. We love our land and our misery. An unseen force attaches us to the steeple. So we pass all our life like horses at pasture, until the rope shortens and takes us by the neck to the little cemetery at the foot of the church. In brief, comrades, we like to die peacefully, and when the hour comes, to sleep beside our family.

"So, comrades, I was a peasant, and Dauphinais. What I am going to tell you took place in the year of God 1674. At that time there was a terrific famine in the provinces. At our home, bread was made of ferns, after having cleaned the earth from the roots, and eaten to the end. If any one had the misfortune to possess a little baked bread, he possessed his own death: he would have been beaten alive in order to get his crumbs from him. I do not lie in saying that the roads from Bonce to Colombier and Tonlieu were lined with dead bodies, and that these corpses were found with herbs in their mouths.

"At that time, as I have said, '74, M. de Louvois, who loved war, had need of money for His Majesty's service. From whom should he ask it? Not from you, citizens, not from the nobles, nor the clergy. Were we not there, we poor fellows, our bodies planted like the tree upon our plot of ground? They put a tax of thirty *sols* on a peck of salt, a tax on the workingman's feed, the stamp duty was invented, the poor toiler was put under the press.

"'Tighten, the cord is good,' our gentleman said. And we ate the bark of the trees. . . . One fine day the Dauphinais let our governor, M. the duke de Lesdiguières, know that they could not pay the taxes. M. de Louvois demanded a hundred thousand *ecus* for the King: go to secret caches, the farmers said. To the hiding places! The tax collectors wore themselves to naught without finding a franc in the Bonce gardens.

"Then an order came from Paris, brought by a man dressed in black who came in a carriage. 'If the tribute is not found in twenty-four hours it will be doubled and exacted by the soldiers.' There you are.

"They began to hang us. The least daring demanded to drink and that made the affair even simpler; the country

was filled with army people. From Vienna to the Tour-du-Pin, there were horses tied to trees, and marauders making off with the grain. The more they took, the less we could give to the King. Finally these soldiers came to live. Villages were transformed into barracks and the Bonce Square became, like the others, a military parade, where His Majesty's troops exercised, before lines of carts, cannon balls.

"Listen well! But before we must drink, and relight our pipes! *Grand-Queux!* Send thy scullion to the tavern-keeper. And you, good dame Koerber, come close, lend me your ear.

"This is a love story.

"I was twenty years old, five feet eight inches tall, had a cottage, a plough, and the most beautiful wife in the parish. She was eighteen. One marries young in our part of the world. Every one said: 'If they could be bought, the Queen would have paid dearly for those cheeks.'

"Jeannette was small, lively and plump as a bullfinch. According to our style, she wore a high chignon and a mob-cap, and fresh linen always, and on the grand fêtes, a farandine Isabelle dress, like the city ladies. M. des Lardières, our gentleman, when my wife was fifteen, deigned to notice her feet.

"We were happy, as much as one can be in the miserable condition of peasants. Each day I went to work the land, sometimes with my wife's father, a widower called Fauveau. . . . A rough man, a jolly fellow in his day as I was in mine. We got along very well together. I had married his daughter for love, even as he had given her to me. We lived as one family.

"Sometimes, at the last vesper bell, Jeannette came to fetch me in the fields. I put the spade and jacket on my shoulder, my arm about my wife's waist, and thus we returned by the crossing.

"You do not know our Dauphiné country. There is nothing rougher. Everywhere round hills covered with grass, tortuous and stony roads, bordered by poplars, which the evening wind blows low; nearer the village, marshes surrounded by alders, willows and whitebeams.

When one returns at twilight, the noise of the frogs jumping among the rushes and gladioli, is deafening.

"One evening we were coming home by the beaten path. It crossed a little vineyard that my poor father left me—peace to his soul! From this place one could see the entire village and the Royal Messenger route that goes from Lyons to La Tour-du-Pin. It was by this route that my unhappiness came.

"That evening, looking far away, we saw a troop marching towards the hamlet—a battalion that was arriving from the forts at Decine, coming to replace our garrison. We were used to our soldiers, and had begun to live comfortably with them. It was because of that that M. de Louvois changed them. One soldier is the same as another. Those who were leaving were Low Britons, enrolled by M. de Chaulnes; they were kind and respected their work. We did not yet know those who were arriving. We only saw that they were in brown uniforms with green revers, while the old ones were in gray with white revers. The second difference we were to know only too well. Our Britons, stubborn but kind, were being replaced by the Champenois, brutal and quarrelsome. Their regiment, it seems, was on the Rhine, with M. de Turenne. But this battalion, under M. de Floris, came from Franc-Comté. After the surrender of Besançon, Dole and Salins, they had come to us for their winter quarters.

"Their first thought was the housing of horses and officers in the best rooms of the farms. Then they spread themselves over the low country, which they robbed properly. Count des Lardières kept open house for the officers, while the sergeants took lodgings in the village homes. I had one in my house, whom I received the best I knew how. He gave me his name, but I will not repeat it, for the name has nothing to do with the affair.

"It was fourteen years ago, and yet I recall every detail of the adventure. The features of this man are graven here, by an acid that would rust all M. de Nanteuil's (who made eleven portraits of the King) coppers. The sergeant who came to my house wore a flame-color uniform with brass buttons and faded embroidery. He wore

on his hip a cartridge box, and his sword clanked against the calf of his leg. On his shoulder he carried the long halberd. He smoked a pipe, which he did not take out of his mouth except once. Entering the cottage garden, he stopped, inspected the house, put his pipe against the wall, and pushed the door.

"I was alone, as Jeannette had gone to aid Fauveau to mend his clothes.

"The sergeant sat down on a stool, then threw his cartridge box and his hat on the floor, and demanded:

"'You are L  bre?'

"'Yes, M. le Sergeant,' I replied.

"He handed me his lodging ticket. I did not know how to read then, so I put his ticket on the bank beside his equipment and hat. My visitor began to laugh, and said:

"'Friend, I'm thirsty.'

"I got a pitcher of water and a mug.

"'You have no wine?'

"'I had wine, M. le Sergeant, but he who came before you drank it.'

"He laughed again; pushing the pitcher away, he began to smoke, looking at me closely without saying a word. At that moment Jeannette came in from her father's. The sergeant, as soon as he saw her, arose and began to play the gallant.

"Did I say that he was a handsome man? He was big enough for a non-commissioned infantry officer, strong backed, blond, with the face and grace of a former servant at the court. Without doubt, in his youth he had learned his beautiful phrases and manners in the theaters of the rue des Foss  s, Saint Germain des Pr  s. . . . Jeannette was modest and wise. When the sergeant got up and curled his little moustache, she made a courtesy and went to the other side of the room.

"The sergeant took a spark from the chimney and relit his pipe. He glanced about: there were pots of brass, with two wardrobes and a fine dresser filled with plates. Finally he announced with a satisfied air:

"'I shall be well with you, peasant. Where do I sleep?'

"'In the upper room, if you please, M. le Sergeant.'

“Where does your wife sleep?”

“In the lower room, with me.”

“He laughed again, and with this very hand I wanted to throttle him—this hand which led my battery many times to victory. I held back. A moment later the sergeant went out to join his companions. He did not return until night, and found me waiting alone for him. He was singing the air and words I have never forgotten:

“Je ne sais pas ce que j’ai au cœur,
Toute la nuit je soupire,
Je sens une vive ardeur,
Qui sans cesse me martyrise.
Une bergère d’ici
Est cause de mon souci . . .”

“Do you know that song, gentlemen? Truly, that proves that army songs are the same in every regiment. . . . Gentlemen, I don’t know if my story is boring you. . . . If it is not, I will talk until daybreak. You have not heard the best. Throw a log under the mantel of the chimney. Nothing is colder than a German Christmas, but nothing is more pleasant than to pass it near a great fire, among good companions, with the pitcher on the table. . . . I will continue my tale.

“The sergeant sang his song in the big room, and taking the candle from me he raised his voice higher, and repeated:

“Une bergère d’ici
Est cause de mon souci . . .”

The candle in his hand he gave me a slap, and gripping the balustrade he went up the narrow stairs, leaving me in the dark . . . I heard him throw his shoes on the bare floor, then his sword. After that, silence. I was close to Jeannette in our bed. Her little round arms were about my neck. She was trembling and crying, as though she had a presentiment of evil.

“I will never forget that night. It was the end of October, the weeks when the squalls come in the country.

The wind blew through the joints of doors and windows. The house was covered, as they generally are in the Dauphiné country, by furze and thatch-straw. We held tight to each other. From the roof came the sound of rustling straw, as though a sleeping giant were turning on our thatch. My wife shivered, and to reassure her, I kissed her on her burning cheeks. She was terribly frightened, and the presentiment became almost a certainty. We heard the clock strike every hour. Jeannette cried, and clung tighter to me. I did not know what to say to calm her. Without doubt I should have to defend her from the advances of the man whom I was lodging; but that did not bother me at all. But she did not listen to me. As the night progressed she began to cry harder. At last she fell asleep with her head on my shoulder. At dawn she was awakened by the rap-rap of the Champenois drums. I had not closed my eyes.

IV

"Champagne is a rough regiment. It was, comrades, just a hundred years old, when the twentieth battalion came to rest in our village. In camp, the soldiers were terrible neighbors. They loved the dance, women, and songs in chorus, as perhaps no regiment in France loves them. . . . The morning after their arrival, the fracas began. Soon all the girls of Bonce, with one exception, felt their feet tinkling. . . . Except one, I tell you! That was my Jeannette. She did not want to leave the hearth, and with her eyes still red she began to spin. She said nothing, but she was furious to see all our rustics, dressed in linsey-woolseys and blue bonnets, make a circle of dull-witted bumpkins about the dancers, in order to see better how the warriors made love.

"I was happy to have so modest a wife. Alas, that morning I had to prepare the rye. I did not leave until after the mass, quite late. Fauveau, my father-in-law, his hoe on his shoulder, was waiting for me at the cross-roads. In the cart he had a pot of cabbage and lard soup for the midday meal, for we were not to return until nightfall.

"It was dry and cold, with a good north wind, that shook the laborers' baskets like the curé's hats. When we arrived at Segalas, Fauveau said to me:

"And thy spade?"

"I had forgotten the spade.

"Go back," he suggested. "It is only a little over a mile."

"I got off at a good speed. The old man smiled, thinking that I had left the implement on purpose to see my wife again. 'Let him think so,' I said to myself. And I walked quicker. Certainly the pleasure of taking my wife in my arms gave force to my legs and I blessed the distraction that made the distance seem shorter. . . . In less than a quarter of an hour I was in the village. The soldiers trifled and smoked, except those who, with musket on their shoulders, mounted guard at the corners. No officers, no police. I tell you that there is not another regiment of this kind in the King's infantry.

"I passed the square under the fire of jests from the throng. I took the lane surrounded by abandoned wells, and, reaching the barrier, I entered my garden. What did I hear? You will guess: the sergeant's song! This time another verse:

"Le jour je suis tourmenté,
De la rigueur de ma peine,
Sans cesse je suis tenté,
Par une force humaine.
La bergère que je vois,
Est cause de mon émoi."

"The laughter, and the frightened cries of a woman. I threw myself against the door of my home; it gave way and I entered like a madman. There were three sergeants in the room, bare-headed, and in disorder, without their guns or cartridge belts, but their swords were in place. . . . In the midst of them, crying and begging aid, my Jeannette was defending herself. Two of the sergeants, whom I did not know, were there as witnesses, while my guest attacked. The struggle must have been going on for some time, for my wife was disheveled. Her

corsage was half unlaced; her soft brown hair could be seen from under her cap. And her pretty face, gentlemen, was distorted by tears. She was the first to see me, for the sergeants had their backs turned to me. I had arrived barely in time. Poor little thing! She defended herself so well. She had scratched his face so that a fine line of red ran down the man's tanned cheeks, leaving a stain on his muslin necktie. The soldier was livid with rage. With one arm he held Jeannette tight to his waist, with the other he tried to undress her.

"It was at this moment that I appeared. Gentlemen, in the army I pass for fearless. I was then. The war has given to me as to each one of us, the habit of courage. I was more robust then, but as brave as today—nothing better for a boy than to put him to work in our rich Viennese country.

"I threw myself against the marauder, and, pushing him with all my force, I knocked him against the chimney-piece. Stunned, hurt, he got to his feet and came upon me, crying:

"By God! master sot, you will pay for this!"

"I didn't let him get to me. I caught him head on. A well-directed blow to the groin sufficed. He rolled on the ground swearing like a heathen. My wife screamed with fear. His comrades threw themselves on me. Seizing me by the arms, they covered me with blows. I watched, my arms pinned behind my back, the chief culprit get up and push Jeannette aside. Then he turned toward me and dealt me two blows, crying insolently:

"Do you need anything more to teach you reason?"

"I writhed like a worm. . . . 'A sword, a gun!' I cried, 'that I may avenge my honor!'

"At these words the three sergeants broke out laughing. Honor! The honor of a churl, does that count? It was indeed a question of our honor, it is said, in a time when the dragon horses ate our grain, where each one, noble or clergy, governor or excise man, farmer or captain insulted us, plundered us, disciplined and hung us.

"My cry unnerved the soldiers and I was literally thrown out of my home.

"Their idea, as one can imagine, was to be alone with my wife. But while our tormentors were busy with me, she slipped out by the trapdoor of the hayloft. . . . I saw her an instant after, running along the path which crossed our vineyard. She stopped under a peach tree, and signaled to me to come to her. I was there instantly. It was exactly midday, for the chimes sounded in the tower of Bonce.

"In silence we took the road to Segalas, where, seated in the furrow, close to the oxen, Fauveau peacefully awaited me.

V

"When he saw us he got up.

"'Father,' I said to him, 'I bring your daughter back to you.' Then I told him in detail all that had happened.

"He did not grow angry. Only one saw tears rolling down his sunburned face. Old Fauveau had become, by force of misery, like a tree bent by the wind. He had known the grand famine, in M. Colbert's time. His will was strong like his reflection; his long poverty had instructed him.

"'What are you going to do?' he asked in patois.

"'What can be done against one of His Majesty's sergeants, when one is poor, a village toiler, only good for work and prayer on Sundays? What can I do, tell me.'

"Old Fauveau advised me to pretend to forget, without ceasing to watch the actions of my enemy. 'Watch your wife, and keep quiet,' he concluded.

"I did not understand it that way. I let him see that.

"'Father,' I said, 'they have insulted your daughter, and I could not defend her. They have thrown me out of my house. I no longer have a wife, nor a home, not knowing how to keep either. Now I have come to leave her in your care. In your house they will not dare to touch that which I love, for the law protects the father better than the husband. If he touches her at your home, old Fauveau, he will go to the gallows. As to me, I swear to avenge her. I know the way. So keep her until my return. I am going. Good-bye. God bless and keep you both.'

"They begged me to alter my decision. Old Fauveau ended by proposing to leave the village with us, to leave all, land and home, to enter the service. I refused, shaking my head, fearing at every word that I would burst into tears.

"We returned in silence to the village, Jeannette shedding burning tears. My father-in-law did not vouchsafe another word. He walked beside the oxen. We waited for the coming of the evening at his house.

"Then stealthily I found my way to my house. I took a stick; then a handkerchief in which I tied up my few belongings. I put the bundle on the end of the stick, the stick on my shoulder, and I left in the night by the route that crosses a flat country called Planase. After seven miles of steady walking through a bleak and barren land, I found myself at the bridge over the Rhone, and the following morning at nine o'clock I entered Lyons.

VI

"I found what I sought without any trouble. On every corner the recruiting sergeants were to be seen. With drums beating, they even waited outside the factories and churches.

"Sitting on a post near the Ainay gate, my baggage beside me, I listened to one of the rogue's arguments. He wore the Picardie uniform, with buckled shoes, a silk scarf and powder of a gentleman. He had an escort of two of the regiment's soldiers, carrying unsheathed swords at their shoulders, on which they had stuck roast chickens, white bread, and cakes. The drummer walked ahead, dressed in the Picardie colonel's colors.

"Arriving at the center of the square, which is on the banks of the Saone, the trader in men waited for the circle of unoccupied, servants, weavers, the dissolute students, lazy seamen, and other unemployed to form about him and his men. Then taking off his hat with a mock politeness, he began according to formula:

"In the name of the King, I make known to all men, of no matter what condition, from the age of sixteen, that

if they wish to enroll in the Picardie regiment, father of the Old Sixth infantry, oldest regiment in the kingdom, that they will be given fifteen pounds, twenty pounds, twenty-five pounds, according to the experience of the man, and at the end of three years, a discharge and a good recommendation.'

"He stopped, made a sign to the drummer, who beat his drum loudly, while at his sides the sharks lifted their provisions high, crying at the top of their lungs. With a gesture he silenced them, and began again:

"'All those who are willing to enlist have only to approach.' Saying this he shook a silk mesh purse in the air, through which one could see pieces of gold and silver. Several simple-minded ones approached. Should I follow them? No. I had my reasons for not enrolling in an old regiment.

"Then I crossed the city. I had several *sous* in my pocket, and a roadhouse would give me shelter. I found one, where I ate with a good appetite. Towards two o'clock, at the entrance of the Change Bridge, I found what I was looking for. The Dauphiné recruiting sergeant was holding court in almost the same surroundings as his compatriot of the Picardie. I acted the stupid a bit, then they offered me a drink. We were soon taken to a soldiers' bar under a tent, where we drank several bottles of Beaujeu wine, full of fruit and strength. I put a gold louis in my pocket, and without hesitation followed my new companions. The recruited squad, composed of ten men, took the Neuf-Ville road, where the regiment was stationed.

"Comrades, you understand my plan: I wanted to raise myself to the level of my enemy, find him again, provoke him, and—but wait!

"I knew nothing. I learned to read. When one is past twenty it is hard to begin to study! More than one among you know that. For months and months nothing could discourage me; neither gibes nor sneers. One day, however, an order came from Versailles ordering the discharge of a great many recruits as a measure of economy. Those who were to be sent were called 'suspects.' Before

leaving the regiment they were severely disciplined before the whole company in order to disgust them with military service and teach them that His Majesty wanted only honest men. Once well beaten they were sent off in their ragged old clothes with three *sous* for return transportation for a maximum distance of thirty miles.

"I was among those unfortunate ones who were to go under the rod. An old adjutant from Saunieu recognized me and saved me. In short, after six months of hard work I found myself in the first class and able to sign my name.

"Shortly after, I left for the war. I have seen many countries and many battles but I have never forgotten my own village nor my revenge.

"After a while I joined the regiment at Charleroi and from there we went on towards Thuin sur Sambre before engaging in battle at Duckheim and at Altenheim. We laid siege to Fribourg and captured Kehl. On September sixteenth, 1677, we defeated the Strassbourgeois. . . . But why tell you of my campaigns, friends, for the hour is late? I want to finish talking before daybreak. I became *anspessade* (corporal) at Minden in 1679, and M. de Dampierre made me a sergeant before Girone where the Dauphiné regiment led the attack of Marshal de Bellefond's army. I was wounded in the attack. Our regiment returned to Roussillon and here I am.

"Fourteen years have passed! Yes, it has been fourteen years since I have seen the smoke of my native village. I know that my wife is there. I have written her and the priest has replied, for her.

"Fourteen years in the harness and not a day has passed that I have not thought of my dear Jeannette. She is at her spinning wheel at the door of our cottage, shielding her eyes with her hand to catch a glimpse of her husband who one day must come up the Lyonnais road. It cannot be a dream yet it seems almost too fantastic to be real. This vision has been my guiding force through the most terrible of battles; through flames, smoke and cannon fire. More than twenty times, this troubling picture has nearly cost me my life. At Grave we laid siege to the German position. The Dauphins attacked first, and my

company, with Captain Despeyroux, was in the lead. I was surrounded by the enemy. I fired constantly without even the time to fix my range. I felt the enemy's lance brush against my cheek. The cannons roared; men were dying all about me. I was suffocated by the stench of blood and burnt wood. My strength abandoned me; I feared that I should never see Bonce again. I trembled so that I could not fire my musket. Then for the first time, there came to me this vision of Jeannette who urged me on. It has never left me. Even as I speak I see her smiling at me through the tobacco smoke.

"Do not make fun of me, my friends! Rather ask me how is it that one so in love as Sergeant L  bre could ask to change his regiment, instead of receiving his *congé*.

"I will tell you that L  bre is searching for a man, and that he will find him. He must find him. The most severe desire would not refuse revenge to an honest soldier. Heaven itself would want the affront wiped out, because I am alive, and he also . . . yes, comrades, he is alive, and I know it. Look at me well, and mark this hand; I will not take the road that leads to my village until I have returned that man's blows.

"Ah, how I have hunted for him, with what care; from regiment to regiment, garrison to garrison. Heaven is my witness that I have taken my leave to go into all the camps in Europe asking for my insultor. In fifteen years of war that is possible. All the uniforms and grades have shown their value at Dauphin  's side. Long ago I again saw Champagne. My fellow is no longer there. Killed? No, nor promoted, nor a deserter. After a brawl he had to change his regiment, thankful that M. de Bois-David, the field master, did not reduce him to the ranks. I was told that he had passed to Navarre, under the orders of the famous Marquis d'Albert. I encountered Navarre: there was no trace of my man. . . . From there to Picardie, d'Auvergne, Flandre, Royal, d'Aunis, Dauphin  , Aquitaine, Poutou. I searched up to the French Guards, which were at our right the fatal day of Consaarbruck. All in vain.

"However, I have not lost hope. The Dauphinois are stubborn people, when it is a question of paying for an

insult. You will see. . . . But I have talked too much. My throat burns. Fill my cup. I would drink to Jeannette, then to our splendid regiment. And you, the oldest of us, you who do not jest, tell me if I have told my story well?"

VII

The Grison was about to reply, when the sound of footsteps was heard in the street. Then a voice was raised in song:

"Mon mal est si gracieux
Que bien content je l'endure,
Et si doux me sont ses yeux,
Que j'en aime la blessure."

"Eh!" Sergeant Belle-Rose spoke, "here is Merru, nicknamed Male-Mort."

A moment passed. Silently pulling on their pipes, the non-commissioned officers waited. The song and the footsteps were no longer heard outside. The new arrival was without doubt searching his way. Lébrequier drank, then wiped his brow on his cuff, the floor resounded with the movement of feet and the sword sheath. Then the door opened, and Merru, nicknamed Male-Mort, entered, singing at the top of his lungs:

"Une bergère d'ici
Est cause de mon souci."

There was a terrible silence. All the sergeants looked at each other, then at Lébrequier. He was pale, but self-composed. Merru came towards his companions.

"Long live the King and the Lyonnais!" he cried, waving his hat.

Lébrequier knew him at once. He was very little changed, except that he was white, with his hair in a braid, where before he had worn it long on his neck. His face showed less than forty years, and was neither tired nor worried. Under the sunburn his color was vivid, his moustache

black and curled at the ends, showing a thick-lipped, coarse mouth.

"I bring you all good health," Merru continued. "To you, Belle Trogne; to you, Grison; to you, unknown companion, I drink. In this cold country it is a pleasure to find good lodgings, a wood fire, young hostess, and frank companions. Look at the mire of those cursed German roads! . . ." So saying, he showed, in the feeble candle-light, his pointed, uptoed shoes, and his spurs covered with mud.

All were silent. Jovial and carefree as he was, the new-comer felt the constraint of his comrades. He glanced about him. Drawn and morose, the faces expressed—he thought—the lassitude of an orgy. However, the place where he found his brother officers did not show the disorder that one would expect to find in a room after a military spree. And each one of them had the air of—waiting.

Grison had raised his goblet to reply in the name of the company to the salute that Merru brought them. The old sergeant remained motionless, the glass in his hand:

"You are right, Male-Mort," he managed to articulate at last.

All the table rose, except Lébre, who contented himself with turning on his stool. At this moment a clear violet light filtered in through the small squares outlined with iron of the window. The light gradually turned to the palest blue. A cock crowed. The rumbling of a drum came from the border of the Queich.

Then Lébre got up, and, going towards Merru, said to him:

"I am Lébre, whom our companions have nicknamed Sombre Accueil. But in the Dauphiné regiment, from which I come, they called me Bonçois-sans-Quartier."

"Welcome, as usual," Merru replied.

Lébre pretended not to see the latter's hand. He took another step forward, and looking Merru square in the face, asked in a plausible tone:

"It is said that you are punctilious on the question of honor, sir. I would like to ask your advice."

Merru felt something coming, yet without understanding clearly the reason, replied in a dry tone:

"Advice is better than a compliment. . . . Ask me."

"If one of us had received a blow, in the face, what would you counsel him to do? I would like to know your honest opinion."

Merru raised his right hand to his moustache, with an insolent air curled it, and settling himself, the head high:

"A slap," he said, "neither receive, nor heed it. One takes it as a surprise, one returns it. And the next day one fights a duel. . . . What, I beg you, are you driving at?"

Without changing his mask of bravado, Merru looked at the group of non-commissioned officers. Gravely smoking in silence, their hands deep in their pockets, not one of them flinched. Merru began to whistle. L  bre took a step towards him, and still in the calm tone:

"Do you remember a peasant you slapped in the face, nearly fifteen years ago, because he prevented you from caressing his wife?"

"The peasant no, but the wife perfectly."

"I am the peasant!" L  bre said. He took a step forward. Then lifting his hand, with all his strength he slapped his enemy in the face:

"Sergeant Merru, you have made me wait long. Ten years to wash away an affront! I hope you will not refuse me any longer, and we will not wait until tomorrow. If you please, we will fight immediately, before this house. Our witnesses are here. Let us go, comrades, and I beg you not to disturb us until either this man or I have fallen dead on the ground!"

"On our way!" Merru replied.

They all went out in silence. Grison measured the steps. The sergeants placed themselves at the end of the street to keep the curious back. Several windows opened, then tremulously closed. The duelists took off their coats and vests. L  bre turned up his right shirt sleeve, showing the muscular arm of a rustic. At the base of his neck, Merru's rose skin was hollowed by a scar. They looked at

each other harshly. The weather was cold and clear. The two blades, naked and fine as vipers, shone together.

There was neither salute, parade, nor fencing. Lébre threw himself forward, risking a thrust pass, which made Merru lose his footing. Then, according to the La Touché principles which they use in the infantry, Merru broke in falling back. But before him he had a madman. Lébre, it seemed, had promised himself to finish in a thrust. Giving a bestial cry he plunged towards his opponent; nails turned toward the ground, he gave a side thrust, which made the body bend at the knee, the left ankle touch the road. . . . Directly Merru's arm gave way, the sword dropped from his hand, and fell with a ringing sound on the stone. He staggered, threw back his head, his arms opened from the elbows; then with a desperate effort to get air, he dropped forward, vomiting. A spot of blood steamed in the cold, limpid air.

The witnesses gathered round. The widow Koerber, on the doorstep of her house, wrung her hands.

"Madame," said the calm voice of Sergeant Lébre, "tell me where I will find a letter box."

And he slowly dried his sword on the death cloth that they had brought.

UNDER THE BLACK FLAG

By RENE BIZET

(From *Demain*)

I HAD been seated but a few minutes at a table of the "Pittsburg" when a waiter came to ask me if I'd mind going to the back of the farther room where some one was asking for me.

"It is Mademoiselle Therese," he added when I insisted upon details. "She wishes to speak to you and cannot change her place."

I had no need of further explanation even though I had never taken the wishes of Mademoiselle Therese as orders. But I was alone, expecting no one, and the crossing, in a bar, at the end of an afternoon, is more agreeable in company. I got up, therefore, and went far away from the counter into a corner which might be called obscure in comparison with the central part all gilded with brilliant lights and, like a somber diamond, exchanging a thousand reflections with the lamps and chandeliers.

Mademoiselle Therese was half lying on a large leather couch which might make a comfortable berth and neglecting for serious thoughts the glass of port which had just been served her.

"You'll excuse me, Jean?" she said, holding out her bare hand.

"Of course!"

"I do not want to move from here because I see the whole room and yet no one can see me."

"You are gathering statistics?"

"No, I'm waiting for Marcelle."

I did not understand at once why Marcelle, her cousin, justified all this mystery. Aside from the discussions which sometimes threw one at the other, in the real sense of the term since they came to blows, and which separated them for some hours or some days, Marcelle and Therese lived

together and appeared to me to have common interests. Perhaps a relationship united them which they would have avowed in other times and especially in another world than that they frequented ordinarily, where it is more important to show choice vices than familiar feelings.

"And it is for Marcelle's arrival that you thus hide yourself?"

"Of course. She is to bring me 'frick.' So I don't care to have the entire 'Pittsburg' know of our little money affairs."

The argument has its importance when one knows the price which men attach to the financial situation of their mistresses, even temporary ones, and I was no longer surprised at this modesty which was at the same time a sort of prudence.

Little by little the bar filled up with a clientele, unpicturesque but noisy and busy. I do not think one can compare the bars of today with those of the past and affirm that they are the decorations of a futile life. They are the ante-chamber of the Stock Exchange, a hall where young people discuss the buying of automobiles and the prognostics of the races. The habitués sell everything. There are but the women, there, who traffic in sentiments only, as they always have. Smoking room of a transatlantic liner, commercial office, cross-roads where American habits are joined with French traditions, the bar, with its furnishings of Fleet Street or of Broadway, makes the daily voyage from our coast to Folkestone or to New York. The jazz is there but to unify the atmosphere, one may say, to prevent the foreigner from homesickness and to prepare the Frenchman for new customs.

"Marcelle does not come quickly," I remark to my companion, whose impatience I divine from certain nervous gestures.

"No! If she will only bring the 'frick' . . . Ah! *quel metier.*"

The slang expression which recurred without cease in Therese's phrases witnessed a keen anxiety, for usually my comrade observed the rules of correct language and was even rather proud of expressing herself without a bar-

barism. She must have received a fair education in her youth, or, perhaps, with that will-power which I knew her to have, must have read good authors, learned grammar, since her début in the demi-monde. One often tries less honestly to make one's self unusual.

"But why, Therese, this sudden need of money?"

She looked at me an instant as though to see in my eyes the present state of my feelings for her, then she declared: "You're a good fellow, I know you are. I can tell you the truth. I'm leaving for Nice."

"Well, what of it? It's quite natural . . . March is still the season."

"Of course, but . . ."

"But . . . ?"

"I'm not going there for fun . . ."

"You would be the only one, *chère amie*. In general, one does not go to the Cote d'Azur for one's own pleasure, but for that of others, when one is a woman like you."

"Thanks. You show a delicacy . . ."

"You take my words the wrong way, Therese. I mean that you, with your grace and elegance, are one of the necessary ornaments to the joy of the eyes, from St. Raphael to Menton. Does that insult you?"

"No, but you are joking and I have no heart for gaiety, I assure you."

She was silent, hummed a plaintive shimmy which the jazz imposed on the ears and the spirit, and began in a low voice, after having assured herself that she could not be overheard: "You know, perhaps, that Bormel has dropped me. Three hundred thousand francs a year, *mon petit*, which fall . . . somewhere else. I had debts, in spite of this annual *magot*. You know how I am, careless, joking, living from day to day. . . . Everything I have is sold. As you see me now I haven't got ten francs!"

I protested my devotion with sufficient heat to make Therese add, much moved: "Oh! *mon vieux*, no, thanks, you're a love, but not you! And besides, what would you give me? Five hundred *balles*? And it would be a big sacrifice. No, I need . . . I need . . . I can't tell you. I have to begin life over again, do you understand?"

"Don't exaggerate. It's a bit of bad luck . . ."

"No, Jean, it's a disaster. I've people to feed. My mother, who suspects nothing and who's building a little house on the Basque coast; my kid, who is in a school at Saint-Germain-en-Laye; my brother, who is married and earns seven hundred francs in an office for himself, wife and four young ones . . . and then there are the extras, *mon cher*. An old blind servant, my charwoman whose best employer I was! And Marcelle, who needs me six days out of ten!"

"True, Therese, but your jewels? Your mink coat? This *petit-gris* that you're wearing today?"

"And then? I should go naked. Do you think that in a costume *d'arpete* I'd make a fortune at Cannes? I've kept my big diamond, a brooch with an emerald, and a bracelet. The rest is liquidated. I've paid those who cried too loudly . . . I've kept only what was indispensable, I swear. . . . And Marcelle isn't here yet!"

"You hope she will bring you . . ."

"Perhaps ten thousand. I sent her to Bormel. He does not want to see me, I'd have spoiled the whole thing."

"May one know why, suddenly, he deprives you of his favors and his generosity?"

"Everything is mixed up in it. Formerly, feelings were unstable but fortunes well established. Thus the lover was inclined to indulgence. He had time to listen to the defense of the accused. He often pardoned crimes of passion. Today, one is rich in the morning, ruined in the evening. Every one is more or less a gambler. Gamblers do not have friends. They cannot become attached to one woman. Bormel thought I was unfaithful to him. This conviction came to him at the same time that the pound sterling went up. I was powerless against these two misfortunes."

"Were you unfaithful, at least?"

Therese shrugged her shoulders and smiled melancholically. "Pff! that has no importance. It's the rate the pound sterling has had. Besides, it's of no use to have regrets, still less remorse. I am not one of those who make a romance out of 'If I had known.' Now, I must live,

must find some one. Today is the tenth. I have a terrible end of the month ahead!"

She did not say more. I observed her stubborn, childish face, her hands which played the piano on the tablecloth; the small body, tense, shrunk up on the divan, preparing in the silence for a rapid expansion: and I should not have disturbed her meditations for a long time had I not seen Marcelle gliding between the tables and hastening toward us. Therese, as an exercise of will-power, doubtless, let her cousin greet me, sit down, get her breath, and then, scarcely moving, asked: "Well?"

"Nothing to be done," said Marcelle simply. "Nothing doing."

"That is?"

"He gave me a bill of five hundred."

"That's all?"

"Yes."

"No promise? Not even a vague hope?"

"No . . . nothing. It was even rather humiliating, you know. I said to him, I said: 'Look here, Bormel, you can't let that little . . . !'"

"All right . . . all right . . . go on. What did he reply?"

"Oh! stupid things. . . . 'She's crazy, so much the worse for her! Let her ask her . . .'"

Therese interrupted again, imperious. "That's enough. You've the bill?"

"Yes."

"You didn't get small change?"

"No. I haven't had time. He made me wait over an hour in a dining room. I didn't find that very nice. . . . We've been pals together, too. What a cad! I told you so . . ."

"Sufficient. Now let's do our accounts. Excuse me, Jean."

I politely turned my head and appeared to be interested in the going and coming of customers, in the music, in the lights which played among the bottles and flasks on the counter, a finale of the music-hall, dancing and multi-colored; but in spite of the sincere effort I made to pay no

attention to the words of my neighbors, I overheard pieces of phrases: "That makes a hundred and fifty. . . . You'll see Edouard tomorrow. . . . Don't let the brooch go for less than six hundred. . . . General Delivery, Nice. . . . I'll go without dinner, worse luck."

And I must say that not once did I perceive anything to indicate either the discouragement or the anger of Therese. She accepted the blows of fate with a serenity which one might cite as an example, if in this case one did not wish to call cynicism what is nevertheless one of the rarest aspects of virtue.

"It is finished," she said, turning toward me. "Have you five notes of one hundred francs?"

"Heavens! No."

"We shall get them from the bartender on the way out. That will make a good impression, on the contrary. And now, *mon petit Jean*, I must go; I take the train in two hours."

"What! Already? You don't mean it?"

"Pardon me, but what do you want me to do here? Be pitied by my little pals? Do you want them to say: 'Ah! Therese was given the go-by'? That it be repeated from the 'Pittsburg' to the 'Café de Paris' and from the Champs-Elysées to the Champs de Mars? Thanks! All my efforts in the future would be useless. I leave for Nice. . . . You have already said it is the season. Perfectly normal voyage. And when I come back, no one will have known anything of my worries. Such things happen, of course, but the happening must be kept discreet. . . . Good-bye, *mon petit*."

She got up, took her bag, gave me her hand to kiss, embraced Marcelle, and in the most natural way in the world, greeting this one, smiling at those, she approached the bar, changed her five-hundred-franc note and left.

A bizarre jazz instrument, just as she went out, whined a negro refrain of fearful melancholy. One would have said it was an appeal come from far South American ports, to which, without knowing it, Therese replied in going away. There was so much of distress in this barbaric song which remembered, in this prison, the sun-bathed

scenery and the palms shivering in the wind of the Pacific, that I could not help sighing to Marcelle: "Poor Therese!"

"Yes . . . it's a rude blow," replied the young woman, who was also taking pity on herself. "As for me, I stay here to arrange certain affairs. And then, thanks to my friends, I'll always get on, you see. I have neither her responsibilities nor her position!"

"Do you suppose she goes away with much money?"

"With the five notes you saw."

"No more?"

"Why! Indeed she knows perfectly well how to shift for herself! She only needs to find . . . eh?"

And we speak of other things because one cannot be affected over a departure for too long after one has seen the sails, filled by the wind, disappear on the horizon.

I had known Therese two years. I had met her during the season, at Vichy, where she accompanied one of my old comrades, and at once we became friends. I did not make love to her, she had no need to use her coquetry; I don't know why, we felt entire confidence in each other. She had an outward charm which touched me not at all. In reality I even found her ugly, although I accorded her a certain grace, and I was often grateful to her that she kept the ball of conversation rolling when we were alone. I was not unaware that in the demi-monde, and even in the theater-world, its neighbor, she enjoyed considerable prestige. Under the name of Therese Longchamps, she had obtained, at twenty, sufficient success to become a woman *à la mode*. Her merits, of divers sort, had permitted her to become the accredited friend of Bormel, who passed for one of the most adroit financiers of his time. She showed no vanity because of this, at least not with me, and each time she had a bit of liberty she took pleasure in calling me. We thus passed a few evenings which I count among the most instructive of my life.

Please grant that I do not exaggerate, for the needs of this story, the profit I got from this frequentation which might be called light if it be judged only by the morals of my friend. For my part, I was interested in them to the extent that there was thus explained to me one of the most

astonishing characters of woman that I have ever observed.

The success of Therese was, in fact, the work of her will. I have said she was not pretty. Of medium size, she was not imposing at first view. Her head was small and round, as though crushed beneath blond hair, too abundant and too heavy, like a helmet. Pale gray eyes had vivacity but little *éclat*, and I knew few breasts which could pretend to the modesty of hers. The hands had to be examined closely to convince that the tapering fingers indicated a ready wit. Briefly, if one had seen her, without make-up, in a little tailored suit, one would have accorded her no homage whatever.

Nevertheless, by constant application to the task, she had made an attraction out of her banality. She forced herself to astonish by the contrast of her toilettes, eccentric but of incontestable taste, with her thankless physique; by her ingenious talk, fantastic, unexpected, and by her frequentation of bars and theater wings. She was contradictory without being capricious, and piqued the curiosity by her intellectual qualities which one least expected to encounter under a hat too vast for a brain one believed infantile. She was always on the alert, always on the watch. In a few instants she had guessed your weaknesses, shown up your "dodges," flattered your vanity, adopted your mannerisms, so adroitly that you had the feeling of having beside you a friend of childhood who had forgotten nothing of the common memories of the past.

That, I think, was her great force. She made you feel young. She gave you the illusion that her youth was yours, and you heard from her lips words of other days that you no longer spoke. She forced you to confessions, and, having plundered in your memory, she offered you a savory honey whose taste you found again with delight. Of herself, on the contrary, you knew nothing. Even I, who had so many times talked freely with her of her childhood, knew nothing of her origin. Was she Breton as she pretended when the ocean was spoken of, or Parisian as one might imagine when she told stories of dressmakers, or of Catalan, or Picardy? Her mother, of whom she talked willingly, appeared to me in turn as a worthy

matron who profited by the good fortunes of her daughter and as an austere provincial who prayed that her child should live according to the good principles she had taught her. As for Marcelle, there were days when she was her sister-in-law and others when she was a boarding-school friend.

This voluntary confusion created around Therese a mystery from which she profited. It made legends about her which were transmitted from lovers to comrades and which contributed to giving her a variegated reputation.

But it would have been little to pretend only to this vain glory. From it one must live. And Therese lived sumptuously. She had prepared all for the fight, she rarely let the victory escape her.

What epoch more than ours has been peopled with adventurers of all breeds? Yet in the entire history of filibustering I do not know a more hardy pirate than was Therese. She had the extraordinary hardness of the Corsair, whom no difficulty discourages. Certain captains, however, who sailed the seas had not dared board the ship of the royal fleet, too well armed to run up against. My friend never fled. She raised the black flag, no matter what ship passed near her, and without fear of replies, with the bravery which her self-confidence gave her, she went into combat.

It often amused me to say to her: "You are rigged for the cruise, Therese."

She smiled at this pleasantry and replied: "Yes—but don't pity me!"

I never suspected she could be betrayed by her heart on such occasions, for each time that I saw her at the task she did not appear embarrassed by scruples. How many of these "ships' Admirals" have I seen, I mean of those men of importance whom she met at the races, at the theaters, at a fête, and who, after having treated this small being with a contemptuous glance, gave in to her fantasies, capitulated with smiles, followed the triumphant one without the least shame at their defeat! Bankers, chiefs of industry, masters of literature—all of them personages whose existence was perhaps a marvelous romance of action

and who, themselves, might have been cited as examples for their boldness, their love of risk—bowed their pride before this child-woman who had nothing of the somber romantic creature, nothing of the perverse romanesque, but who was simply an habile courtesan, modern, marvelously adapted to her epoch of commercial and financial battles.

I assembled all the reflections I had scattered about since my first meeting with Therese, while I impatiently waited her coming on the platform of the Gare de Lyon beside the train for Nice. I could not reconcile myself to the thought that she was going to leave Paris, all alone—she whose slightest movement, only ten days ago, would have brought a whole company of men and women to the door of her compartment. I felt there would have been a certain cowardice in my abandoning her. So I had left Marcelle and her optimism at the "Pittsburg" to appease my conscience.

I was not mistaken, as a matter of fact. Therese must have hoped, secretly, that I should be there for her departure, for she did not seem surprised to see me. But she showed her grateful joy by "It's nice of you, *mon petit Jean*," which more than recompensed me for any inconvenience.

She had, for her luggage, a valise, fairly voluminous it is true, but which under other circumstances would scarcely have been sufficient to contain the trinkets which she carried with her, one knew not why.

"I have two big trunks," she said, "which are not very full. I put in them all the linen that I had left and could get in. I might have economized on this useless supplement but for the impression at the hotel it seemed indispensable."

"In what palace do you intend to descend, Therese?" I asked semi-ironically. "Take care, your resources are modest, that I know . . ."

"You are droll, my friend! I stop at the Negresco!"

"At the Ne . . ."

"Of course! I am not going to change my habits, especially now."

"But how will you do it if . . ."

"There is no if. I have told you, I must find something in forty-eight hours. Once my voyage is paid I'll have a hundred and fifty francs left. You see. And yet I did not take a sleeper. That seemed superfluous."

"Therese! Therese! What imprudence! I beg of you let me lend you . . ."

She took my hand.

"Nothing at all, Jean."

She looked at me with a tender sadness.

"If things do not go . . . I'll send you a telegram. You are my last resource."

And she laughed, with these last words, because she guessed my anguish.

The hour of departure was close. We two, lost in the midst of the crowd of travelers, had the air of a couple of sweethearts who had no interest in the farewells of others.

"And when are you coming back, Therese?"

At first I had only a sigh as a reply. Then she said:

"I do not know. How can I tell in advance? I'm going to Nice, but in ten days I shall be perhaps in Naples, in Tunis, in Cairo. What destiny is waiting for me? Under what aspect will my new fortune present itself? Shall I eat day after tomorrow? Through friends you will perhaps hear of a small hungry shark which is installed at the supper hour at Maxim's."

"Come now, don't joke!"

"Does one ever know? I start off on an adventure, Jean. It is the existence I've chosen. I do not pity myself."

The employees called "All aboard." Whistles, above us, rent the air and the smoke.

"We'll kiss, eh?" murmured Therese, approaching me.

I kissed her burning cheeks, held in mine her feverish hands. She showed no weakness, got into the car and leaned out of a window. She went on jesting:

"I am well rigged for the cruise! Wish the captain good luck! I'm not superstitious."

"Good luck!"

The wheels creaked. The train started. In the damp

cloud which escorted it I followed the adieu of a black glove.

The days passed. I had no news of Therese. I went often to the "Pittsburg," hoping that Marcelle, more favored than I, might give me some information about the existence of our friend at Nice. But she too had received no letter and we were reduced to conjectures: "It means that all goes well," affirmed Marcelle, naturally inclined to take everything with good humor when her own interests were not in play. I did not share this easy view. I was troubled, especially since friends at Nice told me they had not even heard Therese mentioned there. I could not help thinking of her. I was still moved by the mere memory of her departure. There were so many risks in her desperate expedition! I know that psychologists and serious people have no interest in women who make it their profession to love. They keep their sympathy for graver personages and consider that a courtesan merits no more than a smile, in passing. Are they then such frivolous subjects, and must these be neglected who, with their light hands, direct exactly those men to whom psychologists and serious people devote all their attention?

What novel can ever approach the drama of this anxious life led by the adventurous Therese since her first heart burnings? All the elements of a tragedy have their part: filial love, maternal love, love without epithet, *amour-propre*, intelligence, ruse, hunger. All contribute to make of this being who has created her own importance the type of the creature tracked, hunted, then victorious, dominating, hunting in her turn. They keep for her a place in society without precise bounds, lead her from frightful misery to peaceful fortune, by all roads, in all worlds, and put in her soul the inquietude, the curiosity, the need to change horizons, all the torments of the poets.

I do not pretend that Therese thus analyzed the feelings of her condition but she had so patiently constructed her personality that she certainly knew the material of the edifice. And that is what rendered my ignorance of her ultimate efforts even more painful for me.

At last, after five weeks of silence, I received from Lisbon this letter which I transcribe with the remark that I had to modify neither the style nor the spelling.

"Dear old Jean:

"No, be reassured, I am not here with a *rasta*. Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro, a Brazilian, I hear you as if you were beside me. Not at all! Leave your old association of ideas. We have changed all that! I am the wife of a Japanese who has a Flemish accent, having been born at Antwerp. I assure you it is very odd. It took time to get used to it, and especially very good manners. For my friend does not allow one to laugh when he makes a fool of himself. He is taciturn, paradoxical and very rich. . . . But at least I must tell you how I arrived in Portugal by way of this Japanese from Belgium!

"I had said to you: at Nice it is a question of hours. The Negresco and a hundred fifty francs in my pocket. These were two factors of a problem whose solution is not within reach of all intelligences. There is algebra, it is true! But I prefer to trust to good luck. It appeared the first day on the Promenade des Anglais, in the form of Lambertin. You've seen him with Bormel at Auteuil or at the Stock Exchange, I do not remember which. He pursued me last year. I repulsed him with that force which profit often gives to virtue—as you would say in a good humor and after reading something. This time I greeted him with the weakness that necessity gives to vice, as I always say. It was not long; I knew my man. I had his card catalogued in my brain. A loafer, loving gossip, preferring an armchair to a bed, generous when bored, regretting his liberality when amused. A small affair and of short duration. . . . He was at the Negresco, so I was sure about my bill. He invited me to all my meals. My hundred and fifty francs were intact. Eight days later came a spell of cold. I shivered. I complained discreetly: 'Ah! if I'd known, I should have brought all my furs!' I said it at a good moment, Lambertin was yawning with boredom. An hour after I had an ermine worth eighteen thousand francs. . . . Ouf!

"What would you have done in my place? I am sure you would have set your eyes on a sable or ogled a solitaire. . . . Perhaps at another time I might have had pleasure in coveting these. But in the state I, was in all booty exacted a rapid realization. Lambertin was temporary. Ermine was money. I therefore went to the furrier and resold it to him for ten thousand. Yes . . . a poor deal. But what else can you expect? Two thousand to my mother; four thousand for my son's board—assured for a year; a thousand to my shoemaker, too neglected up to now; a thousand to X, whom you do not know and whom I do not wish you to know because you'd reproach me Total: eight thousand. There remained two thousand for me. I felt better. But the next day? Lambertin was astonished not to see his gift of the day before on my shoulders. Add to that that he was overjoyed to have won at bac at the Casino.

"But, my dear, your ermine is at the furrier's,' said I with assurance. 'There were one or two changes to be made.'

"He did not insist but I saw he was no dupe. We went to Monte Carlo in the afternoon, we came back to Nice for dinner, and as we drank the last of our bottle of champagne: 'I return to Paris tomorrow,' he said.

"Ah! *au revoir*.'

"And thanks!'

"Oh! *pas de flatterie!*'

"It happened just as I expected. Naturally I am a little afraid he will tell this story at the 'Pittsburg.' Well, what of it, I was in a dreadful hurry. And, too, one forgets so quickly!

"So here I am with two thousand one hundred fifty francs in my pocket. Enough to wait. Yes, but wait for whom? Ah! Jean, old man, you have no idea what one can see when one occupies an observation post like mine! How few men merit our sympathies—not to mention our love!—and what courage it takes to dash aboard! I am not at all a Dame aux Camelias, I am not ashamed of what I do; I simply wait for better times to regret my squandering. But often, really, at three in the morning when I was just

going to bed, I jolly well wanted to abandon everything. 'Quick,' I said to myself, 'a quiet corner, a being who loves me, a smile—anything for a smile that's sincere, with which to caress my eyes, my cheeks, my lips, my arms. All for your frank hand-clasp, for your voice which does not lie. . . . Let my relatives be resigned to a bare existence! . . .' So I have moments of discouragement, my good friend. And then I think of you. Pardon me for associating you with my distress!

"But I bore you with my reflections. Let's get back to facts, and briefly. Five days after the departure of Lambertin, some pals presented to me Monsieur Yogoshira, my present husband. I had divined, on seeing him, that there was mystery in his origin, and I did not burst out laughing when he led me to believe by his phrases, unheard of up to then, that l'Escaut had passed by Tokio!

"He was at once very grateful to me, and has since confessed to me that I was the first person he had met who had not made fun of him from the beginning. How little it needs to please! I am sure that the most brilliant beauty would not have seduced him as did your servant by affecting to find it natural that a Japanese be Flemish. He did not want me to stay at the hotel, he rented a charming apartment for me in a villa at Mont Boron. He speaks very little—it is a habit he has formed because he is always afraid of being ridiculous; he likes me because I talk for him and I thus avoid continual wounds to his *amour-propre*. No presents. Besides, I have not insisted, I stake on the durable liaison. Twice he has given me four thousand francs. He is a curious man who always has considerable sums on him, who is suspicious as a mouse and who does not know how to kiss a woman. I must tell stories to him all day long. I am his Scheherazade. I ask only 'a Thousand and One Nights. . . .

"All this does not tell you why I am in Lisbon. Monsieur Yogoshira intends to go to Japan—which he does not know and where there awaits him, as I understand it, a fabulous inheritance—by way of the two Americas. He desires to visit all the countries in the world. And naturally I must accompany him. At last! I am going to see if the women

of Orinoco have moon-blue hair and if it is true that one has a taste of Paradise beneath the palms of the Oceanic Isles! I am going to forget Paris, my former troubles, and my cast-off things! To find still others, perhaps, and to see that the sky is always too high for my eyes. . . . Apropos, I am going to re-read Loti. That prepares well for travel.

"Lisbon is a most agreeable city. We shall stay here another two weeks. . . . Monsieur Yogoshira wishes to learn a little Portuguese, very useful, according to him, in South America. All that is going to make a mixture! But I must not laugh, my position depends always on my being serious!

"By the same post I am sending three thousand francs to Marcelle. Look out that she uses them to settle with those tradesmen who still demand. . . . For my mother and the child, they have all that's necessary. My brother is provided for.

"Write me here, General Delivery, old Jean. Be as talkative as I. What is going on in Paris? Send me sufficient to be a little homesick. And in exchange accept the affectionate kisses of your

THERESE.

"P. S. I forgot to tell you—and if I speak of it later you will accuse me of secretiveness—that Monsieur Yogoshira has an English secretary, by Jove—a young man of twenty-five, very correct, very sporting, and who is devoted to him. Do not smile. He is not a flirt, as you imagine him, and I am on the point of doing something foolish, I assure you."

I replied to my friend by a letter filled with advice and serenity. Although she pretended a little contempt for the young secretary of her companion, I begged her not to abandon herself to that pity which, according to her own admission, sometimes did injury to her audacity. Convinced of having no more news of her for months, I congratulated myself that her adventure over the ocean would further her good luck. Was not that the apotheosis

of this young existence dedicated to chance, and what racer of the seas—among her possible ancestors—would not have wished thus to end his perilous career?

But, to my great surprise, three days after the departure of my missive, a pleading dispatch arrived:

“Lisbon, 15-3. Rupture. Great annoyance. Send money. Forgive and thanks. Therese.”

What did she mean? Had everything been upset so suddenly? What had she done with the savings she pretended to possess? And why, in any case, did she not return to Paris?

Marcelle knew nothing. Besides, had she suspected some drama she would not have wished to recognize the gravity. I sent off some aid and begged details.

I received them in this strange fashion:

“Lisbon, le 1923.

“Thank you, Jean, and pardon me for having had recourse to you. But it was necessary. I was crazy. There have gone on here, for the last eight days, terrible things. I need to tell them to some one. But to you, I don’t dare. To whom, then?

“I imagine that you have illusions about me. I respect them more than myself. You will always learn the truth soon enough. I am unhappy, Jean, and I no longer believe in my courage. I have always been afraid of my heart. I did everything to submit it to my will. I have not succeeded. This time, again, it has drawn me far off from victory at the moment I held it in my hand. It has led me toward a being who is unworthy but whom I love. Why? I don’t in the least know. His glance, his hands, his breath on my lips. . . . All that I’ve missed for years. Love, that serves us so badly, makes fun of our lies. When we wish to be sincerely faithful to it, it links our fate to that of an assassin. But I should have said too much already if these misfortunes were not common to all of us and did not confound us in the same crimes. . . .

“You will not see me again, happily. Here is the end of my travels. I shall admire neither Orinoco nor the Oceanic Isles, nor all that haunts my rare moments of

dreams. I regret nothing . . . Lisbon has its charms and plays very well the end of the world.

"As for my mother, my son, my brother, see Marcelle. I write you no more of them. You understand. I do not even wish to be affected in thinking of you, Jean. We have had the luck not to have loved each other. What a fine memory!

"Good-bye, Jean. Think of Therese and pray for her."

I was in a paroxysm of anguish. I do not know why, far from her, I was seized with a fondness. I followed her as with my own eyes during her flight. From the top of a promontory I saw her in peril and all my efforts to save her were in vain. On a sort of screen, before me, there unrolled, distinctly carved, the film of her days: reception hall of a palace, hotel chamber—foreground Therese, uneasy, negro musicians, scene where two silhouettes slip past; reception hall of a palace, wide streets of Lisbon—foreground Therese on the watch, hotel chamber . . . Night . . . shadows. . . .

She was so strong, so clever, so sure of herself, that she would know how to avoid disaster. I tried to reassure myself. I dared tell my torments to no one.

The mystery of her last note haunted my thoughts and dreams. My imagination had nothing to hold back its bounds: neither letter nor dispatch.

But one day, brutally, I learned through a newspaper what logical end Therese Longchamps had chosen for her novel of adventures. I read these lines:

"There has just been arrested, in Lisbon, a British subject, Marcus Bromley, accused of attempt at assassination on the person of Monsieur Yogoshira, whose secretary he had been for the past two years. Bromley, who intended to rob his master of a large sum of money, had an accomplice, the woman Therese Longchamps, who is thought to have been the wife of Monsieur Yogoshira. She had disappeared before the arrest of her acolyte. She was found dead last evening in an hotel room. She had hung herself to the window-fastening of her dressing room."

Hung! Like a gentleman of fortune on the gibbet of Savannah!

THE MABOULS

By COUNT DE BONDY

(From *Excelsior*)

“WELL,” said Adalbert to me, “since you seemed interested in the story I have just been telling you about my wise American friend, I feel encouraged to relate you another, about a very strange individual with whom I was associated for a few months about that same time.

“I was scarcely grown up when I had the good fortune to be introduced to Count Mosquitellas in a cabaret restaurant. He was an unusual man in many respects. In the first place, he was at least thirty years of age, which, added to his air of superiority and to the friendship which he soon manifested for me, inspired the greatest of respect for everything that he said, and which (shall I admit it?) has not left the slightest trace in my memory, leading me to suspect now that he never said anything very extraordinary. He was especially striking in appearance: tall, slender, well groomed, a narrow forehead and an olive complexion. His face was rendered still narrower by a long, pointed, bluish-black beard, trimmed in a very bizarre fashion, the sides curled up against his shaven cheeks, as carefully worked as mosaic. It apparently required as much attention as a well planned garden.

“Francis I with a milder nose, Alfred de Musset with a shorter nose, that was the impression he made at Maxim’s on those who went there to imbibe some alcohol as a respite after their classical studies. One might easily have chosen a worse friend; Count Mosquitellas, along with his Renaissance bearing, adhered also to the best manners of the present, associated with the best society of his own age—a very favorable criterion by which to judge a foreigner.

“I never knew his first name. Neither did any one else. He was always called ‘Mosquitellas.’ A strange fellow!

"I knew that he was rich. There were plenty of proofs, such as fine coaches, race-horses, baccarat, a loge at the opera; an absorbing love affair with a dancer, which had now been going on for several years.

"I finally learned his mysterious origin. He was the son of a natural son of the Marshal Duke Olivares. And the name that he went under, Mosquitellas, was, I heard, the anagram of Olivares, which I have never had the leisure to verify.

"To be illegitimate, with his strange figure and piercing expression, added to his prestige.

"The Count never wore an overcoat. In the restaurants, where I met him every evening, he was always dressed in black, with a strange little flower in his button-hole, always artificial, resolutely artificial. When he would prepare to go out, he would put on a gray frock-coat, also decorated with the little insignia made of brass and muslin.

"In view of the fact that the Count had often invited us to supper, Framboise Pepin and I decided to invite him to dinner. He gladly accepted the invitation, adding that he would bring the Spanish singer, Mademoiselle Z., and decided on six o'clock, so that the actress would be on time at the Ambassadeurs for her number. She was one of those singer-dancers—a sort of Tortillada—who flitted about the stage around a felt sailor hat, which served as a 'motif.'

"Six o'clock was a deucedly early hour for dinner. At seven o'clock neither Tortillada nor the Count had arrived. And they didn't come at all that night.

"Reine, my cook, who systematically used to drink my port as she made her mushroom and Madeira sauces, announced that the dinner was going to be frightful. And no matter at what time, she was sure never to be wrong with such prophecies. Why did the poor soul ever cook for me? She always kept the secret. Just to oblige me, undoubtedly. She would have been just as good as a stable boy. But she used to play havoc with the port. Once, when I scolded her for it, she denied that she ever took any, and I told her that I had a mark on the label, to indicate how much had disappeared. At that she burst into

tears and said that she would never have believed that a person of my character would be capable of doing such a thing. I was really quite humiliated. In swordsmanship such an act would be called underhand.

"But you must understand that Count Mosquitellas's slight indelicacy turned out to be for the best. Humanity should be driven along by blows and disdain; we did not escape from this law, so we begged the Count not to be hard on us.

"Soon afterwards, moreover, he used to come regularly to my apartment to play roulette.

"At that time we were living on the first floor of a house near the Champs-Élysées. The owner was an old *cocotte*, widow of an idiot. It was not long before she asked me to leave, the reason being that I was not living as a good, respectable gentleman should.

"And in truth I did not live as a good, respectable gentleman should. But you see, my dear friend, I lived like a nobleman, holding gaming parties three nights a week, sleeping all day, and the rest of the time holding lively discussions with my sweet companion, about politics, pleasures and art, such lively discussions that the hall porter in the adjoining apartment was constantly upset. And I think we were the cause of a good many women dreaming, on the other floors of the house."

II

While Adalbert was catching his breath, which had not been improved by his abuse of tobacco, I took advantage of the opportunity to express my regret that the youth of our generation had never been initiated into the game of Mah Jong, so much more graceful and, if one might say it, more aërial than dominos. In the first place, its very complicated setting protected it from life's commonplaces: it isn't the sort of game that one could play, like bridge, in a railroad coach, coming back from a hunting trip, with a cushion across one's knees. And the game is relatively expensive, which makes it rare. Some couples even go so far as to take a set with them, at all costs, when they are staying in

town for several days, leaving it out in the hall during dinner. The first husband that I ever saw walking in back of his wife, with a mysterious box of Mah Jong under his arm, made me think he had just lent his pistols to Werther. Furthermore, this game is a charming thing just to watch being played, when one doesn't understand the first thing about it. It is all a question of winds and flowers, which leads poetic souls to imagine a gentle breeze in China plucking a peach blossom and gently depositing it on the undulating surface of a little lake: and which affords vulgar souls a thousand opportunities for puns and wise cracks. I suppose, although I know nothing about it, that in China the winds must have other names than those of the cardinal points which we use in Mah Jong. It is due to our lack of meteorologists that we have only such platitudinous names. I am thinking of the Tower of Winds of Athens, of the eight names for winds which the Greeks and Romans had, which have left us only the Zephyr, the Boreas of La Fontaine fables, and Aquilon, usually written in the plural, no one knows why. Beyond this we have nothing but the abbreviations of the cardinal points, and this word cardinal has acquired an irrevocably ecclesiastical tone; it is an epithet of virtue.

But we were not there for me to air my knowledge of antiquity and pour forth upon Mah Jong winds. We were there for Adalbert to continue his story about his friend, Count Mosquitellas.

"There are always two kinds of games," Adalbert said to me, "those which depend on chance and those which depend on the incapacity of the adversary, known by the horrible name of commercial games. Did it ever puzzle you why, amongst friends at a gathering, it is taken for granted that if one of them plays cards better than the others and wins, each one of the losers must pay him something, while if his superiority is manifested in some other way—for example, if he talks better, sings better or plays the piano better than the others—it would never occur to any of them to give him twenty-five francs?"

"At the happy age that we were, Framboise Pepin and I, we would have been ashamed to win on our personal

merits, or any other way than by the grace of God. We believed in fetiches, perhaps merely because at bottom we thought they wouldn't work.

"And when it is a question of chance, games that take a long time to play must be considered a loss of time: the best ones are the shortest ones. Winnings in five seconds by elimination, with never-ending recasting in fours! We loved to play heads or tails, baccarat, and, most of all, roulette, because of the great number of opportunities which one has of replenishing one's empty pocket with a hundred little streams of shining gold.

A green cloth spread over the dining-room table, the ebony roulette wheel in the center, and at each of the two longer sides two squares, for keeping score, embroidered in the green cloth in gilt letters, a goodly supply of sweetmeats and drinks, and expensive cigars! The guests soon began to frequent regularly our infantile gaming house.

"Most of these gentlemen brought ladies with them, who were also fond of playing; but we made it a rule to keep the fair sex in leash, that is, we kept them from too reckless playing, for fear of starting a fracas with the all-too-impressionable dames, and also, perhaps, because they would never pay up.

"Count Mosquitellas used to play phlegmatically, with that almost ceremonious calmness which he never once abandoned. As I have already said, his thirty years inspired us with a great deal of respect, for he was the senior of practically all of us. Now I recall him, standing in the splendor of my little dining room, with his narrow, impassive countenance overshadowed by that surprisingly dark beard, and his strange eyes, black and soft like those of an antelope, but with a slightly haggard expression, wolflike.

"The first time that he joined our party must have been on a Saturday, for the following morning, about ten o'clock, when it was about time for each one to be wending his way homeward—after fortunes had been won and lost more than once that night—Mosquitellas calmly announced that he was going straight to the eleven-o'clock mass at Saint-Philippe-du-Roule.

"That bit of information struck us all with surprise, for he was dressed in black with a white tie, which costume would be appropriate at church only if one were accompanied by a funeral procession. But the thing he did the very next minute astonished us a great deal more, for, having asked my permission to do something that I could not guess, he removed his trousers right before our eyes and turned them inside out. They were lined on the inside with black and white checked cloth. These he put on over his new personality. Next he changed his necktie for a polka-dotted neckerchief, the end of which he wrapped round his beard, and, after putting on his everlasting gray frock-coat with the little artificial flower in the button-hole, covering up the black flaps of his undercoat, he bade us good-bye and off he went to the divine sacrament, as serenely as virtuous people, who love to watch day dawning but, unlike him, do not wait up all night for fear of missing it."

III

"It was only natural," Adalbert continued, "that, since I had gone to the expense of the material and the refreshments, I felt like gaining something for myself by running the bank and making profit from zero. In spite of my youth I had already put money down two or three times at Monte Carlo, and the speed with which my modest pennies had passed from my pocket to that of His Highness the Prince of Monaco made me realize what a wonderful thing roulette is, provided I were the banker rather than the player, which my conscience would no longer permit. I, as treasurer, tossing the ivory ball into the little maelstrom, and my partner Framboise raking in the punters, that was our first vision of happiness.

"But our bright prospects were soon taken down a peg. What was the trouble? Weren't there enough players? The score diamonds didn't balance. I took in full numbers and paid out reds, evens and odds without counter-parts, and half dozens in groups of six. It finally cost me so much that I had to quit and different ones volunteered to run the bank as they felt so inclined.

"Now, when one retires to private life and becomes a simple player again, like every one else, the only way of winning is to leave off playing at the proper moment and retire from the game. But that is not possible when playing in one's own home, because the old fellows never lift anchor until they have regained all that they have lost; in fact, one can consider himself fortunate if his opponents do not decide to stay and win something, into the bargain.

"So the whole affair turned out a pretty poor speculation for me. Each night almost all of them would lose ten or fifteen thousand francs in the course of the evening, then they would win them back again, and the few who remained on till the last were never willing to leave until they had won all that they had lost and ten or twelve louis besides.

"Then there were the very persistent ones: a naval officer who, like the rest of his species, was wild about horsemanship and very fond of hunting wild boars. His greatest delight was to gallop after a pig, as the amateurs of this sport are wont to say. I never knew the slightest thing about his naval occupations. My friend the Greek, Pericles, used to play at quits, scientifically, pencil in hand, composing them himself. They were infallible whenever he played with me, but they never helped him at Monte Carlo. Two brothers, Belgians, used to come intermittently whenever their father, a banker, would let them out of his dove-cote at Brussels. They were as pompous as only those are who come from that blond country. An unbearable old college pal, 'Blustering' Schmidt, noisy and uncouth, of whom a precocious marriage fortunately rid us. A great fat youth, who used to tuck a handkerchief around under his collar whenever it was warm and who drank unceasingly: he died soon after that, his heavy Danaide's hide killed him. Horse-racing officers, a duelist, a diplomat dangle between two positions, an ex-convict (so it was said, at least . . . perhaps he said it himself), but appearances saved by a remarkably strong Bonapartism. And all of them fond of racing and riding, especially the sailor, as I have already told you. And finally, Mosquitellas, with his double trousers; and the

usual run of women, whose race multiplies like that of flowers, without one ever knowing when one is going to be replaced by another—sweet, insignificant creatures, whom our love gives personality but for a moment; women of painted lips who, seated at the table, fondled their chains of pearls the whole night, without a single thought in their minds, staring listlessly, perhaps dreaming obscure dreams which we shall never know about.

“One night, about the middle of July, Fortune, which up to then had not been harsh on Mosquitellas, abandoned him and by morning he owed me, if I remember correctly, about eight thousand francs; a loss which would make a street-sweeper smile with disdain today, but which at that time was considered a neat little sum.

“But, of course, I did not wish to accept it until he had insisted so strongly that I was brought round to see things his way.

“I was not used to seeing such a large sum of money, so when I was convinced that Mosquitellas’s eight thousand francs really belonged to me, I was nearly overcome with joy. I could hardly wait until he had left and as soon as he had gone out of the door I ran in search of Framboise Pepin. As soon as I found her I told her what unexpected good fortune had befallen us and the plans which I had just made: ‘We are going immediately to some fashionable watering places where we shall make that money bear fruit in the casinos. Hurry up and get ready!’

“Framboise Pepin rushed to her dressmaker’s. And we set out on our travels.

IV

“We didn’t see Mosquitellas again before the beginning of autumn. Our journey had been very rich in experiences for we were not alone but in a party of four (and even five at one time). But I must not go into this story because it would take me too far afield. Suffice it to say that, although I had succeeded in playing with Mosquitellas, such was not the case when I came to play against the powerful adversaries of Deauville. I was put even to greater shame when I bit the dust at the casino at Bagnoles-de-l’Orne,

which did me even less credit. In a word, I was thoroughly fleeced once more, in just a few days, and Framboise and I no longer indulged in our golden dream by the time we chanced upon the Count face to face, in Paris. I had a presentiment that he was prepared to take his revenge. It was toward the end of September. Almost everybody was out of town. He invited us to dine with him the following day. Just a tuxedo: no formality.

"An informal affair between people who had never seen one another. There were seven or eight of us waiting there in the parlor, before dinner. Mosquitellas, who hadn't yet arranged everything, sent his valet every five minutes to tell us that things were nearly ready. It was a strange apartment, at the very end of the rue Jean-Goujon, near the Avenue Montaigne, in a house that has since been pulled down. We had to climb to the second floor, if I remember rightly, up a tiny winding stairway, which would have seemed like a stairs to a wine-merchant's shop if it had not been carpeted with a heavy, peacock-blue runner. It was a long apartment, one room opening into another, without any hallway, judging by the fact that a servant had to pass by all the guests from one room to another, carrying a pail of water. The furniture was quite decent, except that I saw several daggers stuck into the upholstered arms of the easy-chairs and ragged holes around them.

"Seated in a half-circle were our future friends, stupidly gazing at us—four women, two men, I think. They made a bad impression on us, as people always do when you don't know them. We undoubtedly impressed them just as poorly.

"Our host came in, perfumed, faultlessly dressed, artificial flower, his artistic beard trimmed more painstakingly than ever, still mysterious and a bit distant. He introduced everybody; I haven't a single clear memory of any of them. Then he suddenly glanced up sideways, looked terribly worried, scarcely excused himself, ran out and brought back a little step-ladder such as is used for mounting coaches, and hastily started climbing up beside a curtain. We thought that he was going to go through some

gymnastics, even though he was fully dressed, but all he did was to straighten a curtain rod which was crooked. When he came down amongst us ordinary mortals, I asked him to please explain to me the meaning of the knives stuck into the arms of the chairs; he assured me that he could never read unless he cut each page as he went along, with these Malayan krisses, which I was looking at, and that when he would cut a page he wouldn't bother to interrupt his reading to lay the knife on the table as most people did, but that, to save time, he would just stick it into the arm of the chair that he happened to be sitting in. Nobody thought of contradicting this logical argument.

"In the meanwhile, he led us into a small dining room. The valet, in a white waistcoat, served. There were some fresh flowers on the table, some fine silverware, everything was stylish and very proper. I refused the soup, because of a family tradition. After that I was served with some leg of mutton, very unappetizing in appearance, with some unsuccessful potatoes, soaking in gray, congealing grease. I think the smell of mutton is horrible; the meat in front of me was particularly repulsive to me, so I only pretended to eat any of it, hoping that the next course would be more successful, drinking meanwhile and telling anecdotes that I am sure must have been absolutely insipid. Next came strawberry ice-cream. Oh! Good Lord! That was the limit. I must have looked rather disconcerted, for Mosquitellas hastened to ask me, as he also asked the ladies present, if we didn't wish to eat anything else, some cold meat for example. I did not even try to hide my excellent opinion of his suggestion.

"I was sure that the butler was going to produce something immediately from the pantry, but the poor Mosquitellas said to me: 'I shall send somebody out after it.' Then I repented for having said what I did.

"While somebody was out after the ham and cold tongue at a neighboring butcher's, we were entertained with a most surprising spectacle. I don't know why Mosquitellas found occasion to go to the Henry II sideboard; all I remember is that he got up from the table, went over to the sideboard, and tried to open the little door into the

lower part, but with such ill success that he pulled the panel off its hinges. And lo and behold, there, beside all the piles of very normal dishes and cups and saucers, lying there on the upper shelf, was a hospital douche.

"Of course, that wasn't the sort of thing to be found in a model dining room. People don't use it very much nowadays; it seems that it poured more harm than good into them. Thus it is, people's opinions are forever changing, and one is never sure of the impression that one is likely to make on posterity. Still, there are a good many people who can recall those instruments, in their childhood memories, and, such as it was, it was not altogether lacking in cuteness, standing there, for all the world like a miniature empty bomb-shell, with its dark green narghile tube coming out from the side, with a sort of faucet at the end.

"In spite of all these interesting qualities, it was very much out of place, not to say shocking, to see it there between the gravy-boat and the salad dish. I immediately lost my appetite for the cold meat, which the explorer brought back about ten o'clock (the strawberry ice-cream had meanwhile melted and spread out over the plate).

"When all of the other guests had gone, I did not dare take leave of Mosquitellas without proposing a return-match for the last game we had played together, the previous August—although it was not at all to my liking to think of restoring all the money that I had so unwillingly distributed in little sums here and there in all the most fashionable casinos. And I didn't dare hope to win again, for that would only have made me all the more reckless and consequently more full of remorse.

"Mosquitellas was glad to accept. Since we didn't have a roulette wheel, he brought out a pack of cards and we sat down to play an *ecarté*. This time I won eighteen hundred francs from him. Then, phlegmatically, as was his habit, he intimated that, if it were all the same to me, we might stop the game there, for he was getting sleepy; he immediately paid me and we parted.

"When we got out into the street, I said to Framboise, 'The Count is a good sport. His acquaintance is worth cultivating.'

"'Now you're speaking sensibly,' said my courageous companion.

"I didn't see any more of Mosquitellas for a good many months after that; but, as I could not get the return-match out of my mind, the time seemed to pass rather quickly."

V

"As time passed," Adalbert resumed, "we began to miss Mosquitellas, for, although his absence kept us from running the risk of another game, it also destroyed the plans we had made in the enthusiasm of victory; Framboise and I had aspired to a steady income, thanks to a steady run of bad luck on the part of our unfortunate friend."

"Elpides anthropon, elaphrai theai . . ."

"What are you saying?"

"I was merely saying: 'Human aspirations, goddesses, swift of foot like gazelles,' a sentence which applies to you. Allow me to quote the analogy, before the Berard abolition decrees, when we will undoubtedly be forbidden to express ourselves in anything but the crudest slang."

After my little interruption Adalbert continued with his story: "One day I was told that Mosquitellas had left for the Philippines, that he was going to visit Manila . . ."

"Manila, the Philippines, why those were two famous names linked inseparably with gaming! So he had gone there to study the question in the mother country."

"Yes, I had never once thought of these names," Adalbert cried enthusiastically, always glad to run from one subject to another. "Ah! Manila! I wanted to learn it when I was in the army, but my professors considered me too dull ever to master it. And so I gave it up. And as to philopena, my dear friend, what a stupid invention it is! To be obliged to be on the defensive for hours at a time, to keep just one idea in your head all the time; do the ladies imagine that we don't think of anything else? Moreover, one must have perfect balance, which I assure you I never have possessed. Such opportunism, which enables one to know how to think of just the right thing at the proper moment, and feel perfectly free in your mind all the rest

of the time, that was one of the qualities that people attribute to General Joffre. I am convinced that all during the Marne Battle he never lost one single philopena.

"I never gained but one, and that with a young girl on board a steamer; maybe I have told you about it already; if I have, you must pardon me. I talk so much that I have a right to repeat myself once in a while, haven't I? Why isn't 'motif' permitted in conversation as well as in music? Yes, I won my philopena one Sunday morning, right in the middle of the Atlantic, while mass was going on in the second-class dining hall. I quietly approached my victim, who was naturally not talking, out of respect for the holy occasion, and I said to her without ostentation, but with determination: 'Good morning, 'Philopena.' There was no reason for that to seem sacrilegious, because, in such a polyglot crowd, most of the people couldn't understand and undoubtedly thought that, in a frenzy of devotion, I was directly addressing the Holy Virgin by some pious exclamation that was probably customary in my country.

"At all events, the Philopena passed off very well and that was an end of it; it even served as a bond of friendship with the young lady. I don't remember what the present was that she gave me, but I do remember that one very stormy afternoon, in the Bay of Biscay, I met her in the corridor and as a mark of my esteem I kissed her on the lips. She begged me not to do it again, because it caused her such emotion that she would faint. 'Don't do that,' I said to her, 'because your mother might come.' Upon which she recovered her spirits and assured me that nothing of the sort was likely to happen, for at that moment her mother was lying in her bunk very seasick and was in the midst of throwing up. Ah! Life is an amusing thing!

"But what I am about to tell you is, unfortunately, much sadder. I learned that Mosquitellas left for Manila as a steerage passenger, like an emigrant, absolutely bankrupt. How, in such a short time, since the dinner at the rue Jean-Goujon, had he managed to dive so deep? I never found out. I was overwhelmed to think, with an innocent cynicism, that I had pocketed my unfortunate comrade's

last ten thousand francs. It was certainly just in line with his eternal eccentricity, or rather madness, to have paid what he owed without intimating that it was very inconvenient for him at the time; but his madness, which had up to then been only amusing, now commanded our greatest respect and admiration. And I have known enough Jeremiahs who spent their nights fretting and fuming, calling on all the gods and the spectators to bear witness to their ill-luck, and who would curse and complain even when they were winning the very shoes off my feet, to have the very highest admiration for Mosquitellas's calm and nonchalant action.

"So this strange man, whom I did not know until at the very end of his career, disappeared from the circle of races, theaters and celebrated cafés. A strange face and figure, with a touch of the unreal and of anachronism. Morally, a very mysterious individual also, who had many associates but, as far as I know, not a single friend. Absolutely alone, without even authentic parents, only bearing the name of a family that didn't wish to have anything to do with him, it was no wonder that he was pursued by ill-fortune. And then, without a cent of money, nor any hope of finding any, he had set out for Manila—so far that nobody even knows where it is!—abandoned like a cork that floats indefinitely about, on the waves of the Indian Ocean. Framboise and I felt truly sorry for our poor friend Mosquitellas and, as is always the case with irreparable misfortunes (and perhaps in the bottom of our hearts, just because they are irreparable), we regretted not having done anything to help him. But later on, there is so much smoke in the restaurants, that the very phantoms of our departed comrades become more ethereal and unreal than the phantoms that haunt the nights of a simple bourgeois. We settle such questions in a flood of excellent words, and little by little even they quiet down and vanish, like smoke, and their pleasant ruins dance softly to the tune of the orchestra.

"As soon as our friendship and attachment for Mosquitellas had evaporated into thin air, nothing remained of him but a dried mummy and he was reduced to a pretext

for anecdotes. In that respect his originality kept him pretty much alive amongst us.

"But that is not the end of the story; I have so far described Mosquitellas dressed in black and in checkered trousers: I have yet to tell you about his return from Manila, a beggar, more sublime than ever in this third metamorphosis."

VI

(I let Adalbert finish his story about his insane friend.)

"I can no longer remember either the exact day or the place where I first saw Mosquitellas, after his trip to Manila, but that doesn't matter in the least, for, from that time on, his appearance did not change in the slightest; the few times that I came upon him after his return, he always looked exactly the same. He was much thinner, and although at one time his thinness might have been considered voluntary, in a search after elegance, it was pitiable now that it came from actual privation. His black beard was still pointed, although no longer adorned with grace-notes; and when he took off his hat, he exposed a narrow forehead, almost entirely gray, the dried-up little head of a bird. But as I almost always met him out of doors, he usually had his hat on, a battered, black felt hat, such as is worn by those who go to bull fights, and behind his hat, his hair cut in ecclesiastical style, long, thick and oily. When you were a child studying at the religious seminary, you must have known just such a type, one of the proctors or other, a true forerunner of the crested fowls that are in style today. Mosquitellas wore a long overcoat, or rather frock-coat, of chestnut brown, with a cape, and he used to wander about the streets in this queer costume. If you have ever seen one of Steinlen's drawings, a picture of Jehan Rictus, if I remember correctly, you will get a fairly exact picture of my desolate friend.

"As I have said before, I was very sorry to think that I had been to blame for completing his ruin and I was resolved to help him as soon as an opportunity presented itself. But the very first day of our meeting, Providence,

which had handled poor Mosquitellas so roughly and which reserved nothing further for him but hard blows, dealt him yet another blow by so arranging matters that I, in whom had been sown such a promising harvest, could find nothing in my pocket to offer him but a miserable five louis. And this unfortunate encounter was the beginning of a sort of habit, and we soon grew accustomed to giving him very little, as he also grew accustomed to receiving almost nothing.

"Moreover, Mosquitellas had no need of money; he laughed at such trivialities, and whenever he came into possession of a few pennies which would enable him to live for an hour or two longer, he would give himself up to philosophical discussions and grow intoxicated with disputes, especially religious ones.

"One night, just when people were commencing to pour out of the theaters, I came upon him and found him particularly disposed to converse and in the course of our conversation he pulled me into a sort of cavern in the back entranceway of the Terminus Hotel, in front of the Saint Lazare railroad station. And there, as he held me with both hands by my lapels, his words still ring in my ears: 'It is absolutely useless for you not to believe in Lourdes, you will never undermine the miracle, Monsieur de Scoury, you will never undermine the miracle!'

"And mark you, my good friend, there was never a moment in my life that I felt inclined to belittle the miracle. I have always supported it.

"Then Mosquitellas took a piece of bread out of the pocket of his chestnut-colored overcoat and began munching on it, after he had sprinkled a little tobacco on it, emptying it out of a used package of cigarettes.

"I urged him to eat something else but he refused, saying that he preferred to talk and that this meal combined with tobacco was all that he required.

"He reviewed the whole Bible that night. He was pretty hard on Abraham, likening him to a big fish. (I don't remember the name of the fish and would rather let it go than make a wrong quotation. All I remember is that he used the word 'circumference,' which is a strange way

of describing the size of a fish.) But the proof that he brought to the support of his arguments was so conclusive that I have lost all respect for this patriarch.

"I was curious enough to take the trouble to inquire at the office of the Terminus Hotel if they saw Mosquitellas around there very often: they told me that, when he was well-to-do, he used to live there and that he used to spend a great deal of money giving dinners in his apartments, and that for this reason they used to let him warm himself in the vestibule in the winter time.

"It was a sad affair. Where on earth did the poor fellow live when he wasn't tramping the streets? None of his other old friends, some of whom used to know him much better than I had, could tell me. They also used to come across him from time to time and, after he had borrowed a little money from them, he never talked any more about himself or his sorrows, but he would astonish them by strange lectures of an erudite and a dreamer. It was rumored that the Olivares family, having learned of the sad plight of their wild offspring, tried to get him a job as clerk in an office. They didn't succeed. Mosquitellas refused to let himself be yoked. Nobody has ever given me such a strong impression of solitude in the midst of the mob, as though he had dropped there from another planet, indebted to no one, either for material necessities or for moral comfort.

"Several years passed. With the most unusual display of discretion, Mosquitellas never wrote to me, nor did he ever come to see me, nor did he ever allude to the old days when fortunes were won and lost at our entertainments. But we often used to meet each other on the street, and I began to be sorry for both of us, because although it must have been hard on him to lose his last ten thousand francs, it began to grow more and more painful to me to realize that I had won them, especially as I felt indefinitely at the mercy of my victim. Mosquitellas never passed by unnoticed. His appearance was very bizarre, his gestures were extravagant, his words compromising and he never had anything else to do but talk.

"The last time that I ever saw him must have been the

year before the war. I met him at the Place du Trocadero just when I was running down into the subway.

"Will you pay my way?" he asked me.

"I consented and told him that I was going as far as the Place de la Concorde; he indicated that he was going there too. His mental state seemed to be much worse than it had been, for he immediately told me that he was in great need of a thousand francs, which I easily reduced to one louis. But he undertook to explain what he intended to do with the thousand francs as soon as he could get hold of them and I can assure you that his words made me feel extremely uncomfortable. Standing up in the subway, with his eternal chocolate-colored overcoat and his *aficionado's* hat, he was more conspicuous than ever, especially since he grew more and more excited and shouted in order to make himself heard above the din of the train. Three personages, not so insignificant, kept cropping up in his conversation, for he had acquired the conviction that some extremely important family papers of his had been illegally acquired by William II, Emperor of Germany, and that the Pope was the only one who could restore them to him. But he, Mosquitellas, had no personal connections with the Pope; so he planned to appeal to His Holiness Monseigneur the Duke of Orleans, with whom he used to associate, and whom he still considered a friend. It was the simplest of affairs: he planned to go and meet the prince at Brussels, and from there, armed with a letter of introduction, go directly to the Vatican, but of course, only after he had provided himself with the necessary funds for this double voyage.

"Our trip, only to the Concorde, seemed terribly long to me. The passengers who happened to be seated near us were very much interested in my companion's projects, and when one does not like to be made conspicuous, such a situation is apt to be very embarrassing.

"When we got out into the broad daylight again at the Place de la Concorde I had a fixed determination to get rid of Mosquitellas. He clung on to me, but when we reached the rue Saint-Florentin, I told him that was as far as I was going, that I had a rendezvous there with a friend,

and after cordially pressing his hand I hastened up to the fifth floor of a house which I had never before seen.

"That was the last time that I ever saw my extraordinary friend, Count Mosquitellas. The war must have blasted his designs on William II. I have just learned that he died recently at Caen at the Bon-Sauveur Hospital and less unfortunate than one might have believed, for at the moment of his death it turned out that he was the Dauphin."

THE TAXI DRIVER

By PAUL BOURGET

(*To Francis Carco*)

I

ON this late November afternoon the Countess de Megret-Fajac had gone out to do her errands on foot and also to free herself, with a little exercise, of a slight headache. From the rue de Tilsitt—where she resided—she had walked as far as the Rond-Point des Champs-Élysées, when a sudden clouding over of the sky and a constantly increasing breeze in the leaves of the trees caused her to pause an instant and ask herself if it would not be more prudent to return home before it began either to rain or snow.

"I really should have requested an auto at the club," she thought. Her car had been in the garage for repairs for several days already. She hesitated momentarily and then continued her walk. "No," she pursued, "with all these dock strikes there is really too much delay in transportation and the toys really must reach there by Christmas."

The image of her two little grandchildren had all of a sudden appeared before this grandmother's eyes. She saw them again exactly as they had appeared to her in the photographs received the previous day from South America where her son Jean filled a diplomatic appointment. There were a little girl and a little boy—twins—who were already four years old.

"And to think that they won't remember me," she continued, "when Jean brings them back again! And when will that be? Ah! how willingly would I board the steamer in spite of my fifty-five years, if . . ."

Her husband's health, which held him helpless to his bed, indeed prevented her from considering a distant voyage. On the other hand former diplomatic blunders

made it necessary for this Secretary of the Embassy to seek to efface the memory of them by the assiduity with which he now carried out his present duties. So, pursuing the evocation of her grandchildren, this charming lady who had conserved so admirably all her grace in spite of her white hair repeated to herself:

"I shall continue spoiling them a little so that they shall at least think of me because of this."

Large white flakes which melted as they fell began mottling the asphalt underfoot. It so happened that an unoccupied taxi, with its tiny flag-indicator upraised, was slowly descending the Champs-Élysées. Madame de Megret-Fajac hailed it and, as she was giving the address of the toy shop to the chauffeur, with her hand already resting on the handle of the door, the fellow insisted upon having some indications as to the road he should take. His foreign accent caused her to examine him more closely.

"It's because I am not as yet very familiar with Paris, Madame," he explained with an almost childish little smile showing on his mobile face which appeared both drawn and sorrowful, brutal and refined, and where one suspected a savage and yet aristocratic nature. His hair was of a blonde color and had turned white in some places while in others it was still reddish. There was a look of resignation in his pale blue eyes. His clean-shaven face and the very neat appearance of his nevertheless frayed uniform contrasted with the usual slipshod aspect of taxi drivers. He continued: "I have not been here very long."

While examining this human mask Madame de Megret-Fajac suddenly had that annoying "having-seen-before" impression which affected her all the less because of the fact that she knew herself to be prone to such illusions of resemblance, which are common enough among people whose memory of impressions is more vivid than that of concrete forms. Such indeed was her case. She therefore defined the topographical precisions demanded by the chauffeur without noticing that the strange personage had suddenly looked at her in astonishment. Was it that he too found, in the features of this woman who was quite evidently of another world than his own, a face that was

familiar to him? But in the meantime she had entered the taxi which was now proceeding at a rate of speed that frightened her although it was evident that the car was under the control of an expert driver. She lowered the window to order him to slow down, and, once again, as he turned around to listen to her, she was struck more than ever by this "having-seen-before" impression, and also by the elegance of the car which was as highly polished as some private one. A bunch of flowers graced the crystal vase attached between the two front windows.

"What in the world am I dreaming about?" murmured Madame de Megret. She shrugged her shoulders in an effort to drive from her mind a man's name which had just come to her recollection, that which belonged to the Count Wladimir Werekiew, and turned her attention to the crowd scurrying along through the snow which was now falling in heavy, swirling flakes, congratulating herself the while in having had the good fortune of finding so quickly this warm and pleasing little ambulating retreat.

However, this name, which she had driven from her as soon as it had suggested itself, the time of year and the snowstorm raging about her—all this had aroused in her mind a certain association of ideas which suddenly carried her far away from Paris to the Quai de la Neva, in front of the Marble Palace in Saint Petersburg; and, once again, she relived an episode of her existence that had proven so tragic to her mother's heart that not one of the sinister accounts of the revolution had been able to drive from her mind, when thinking about this city, the recollection of that single adventure.

II

At that time, some ten years ago, her son Jean was beginning his career in the Foreign Office. He had been sent to Russia on a mission which was progressing very slowly. His letters reached his mother as regularly and as frequently as usual. She worshiped him and demanded a daily letter during his every absence. But gradually they had become shorter. The penmanship betrayed an increasing nervousness. Reading between the hastily scrawled

lines the mother had fathomed that her child was passing through a grave crisis. She became so alarmed that for a time she was tempted to go there in order to clear up the mystery. Her husband had laughed at her, saying with his usual incomprehension of such susceptibilities of the heart:

"Do let him enjoy a love affair in peace. He is merely in love—nothing more."

Then a telegram had arrived proving that Madame de Megret's presentiment had not betrayed her. This telegram had been forwarded by the Embassy. It was enigmatically worded.

"Very serious accident befallen M. Jean de Megret, parents' presence desirable."

That very night the mother had taken the train. She had insisted upon her husband's not accompanying her. She sensed a mystery and desired to prevent a painful scene between father and son, in the event that a passionate love drama lay concealed behind this enigmatic accident. In this respect, too, her instinct had judged correctly. She had found her son severely wounded in the chest from a bullet received in a duel which had followed a scandal which was still the object of all conversation and which threatened to cut short the young man's future in the Diplomatic Corps. The temptations of the Russian capital had immediately claimed him. His evil genius had decreed that he should associate himself intimately with another youth whose elegance, audacity and winning ways had made him the idol of the hour in Saint Petersburg. It is known only too well that such reputations as this endure only for one or two seasons; but during this time what indeed is not the prestige that they exert on young men who have just left home and who are both tempted and disconcerted by hitherto undreamt of passions! This dangerous initiator whose fascination had attracted Jean de Megret was, indeed, this very Wladimir Werekiew whose name had just suggested itself to the mother's memory by some freakish resemblance—so she would have asserted. Madame de Megret's recollections defined themselves more and more precisely until they created in her mind a veritable hallucination of the memory. She could see herself talk-

ing to one of her son's collaborators and thus learning the details of the mental crisis she had suspected while perusing his letters. Wladimir Werekiew was an officer of the Guards and personally attached to the service of one of the Grand Dukes whose high influence had on several occasions smoothed out his rash doings. Between him and Jean de Megret there had arisen one of those spontaneous affections such as occur before the experiences of life have had time to teach man to be on his guard and also to harden his heart. The immediate result had been the forming of a comradeship which had first of all led to gambling and later on to all sorts of excesses including drunkenness. Alas! the baccarat, the late suppers prolonged until day-break, the orgies at the "Iles" with the Bohemians—all this wild, frenzied dissipation which resembled in no respect the orderly Parisian existence carefully regulated by his mother had, within a few weeks' time, produced in this youthful Frenchman a state of morbid emotion; and this unsettled condition of mind had manifested itself, to the astonishment of all who knew him—he who had been so very courteous and retiring—by the most violent and unexpected demonstrations.

One night at the club Jean had lost a sum of money which, for him, was an enormous amount. He had kept his nerve only by drinking heavily and by the encouragement proffered by Werekiew who laughingly exclaimed: "Haven't you got any backbone?" A little after midnight the two friends had gone to one of the most popular restaurants in the city. There they had found themselves accompanied by two actresses from the Michel Theater who were so widely known that their table—where they were indeed conversing very loudly—was attracting considerable attention. Jean de Megret had continued drinking. At a certain moment a discussion on a most futile of subjects—the date when a certain horse belonging to a celebrated Russian stable had won the Grand Prix de Paris—had arisen between the two young men. Suddenly the two actresses had jumped to their feet with a scream of fright. Jean de Megret had just hurled his champagne glass straight into Werekiew's face. The latter, who had been cut on

the forehead by a broken piece of glass and who was bleeding profusely, struggled with the two women and the servants of the place, who prevented him from throwing himself at his aggressor who was by this time so completely drunk that it had been necessary to carry him out to a carriage in order to take him home.

"No," Werekiew had exclaimed the following morning to two of his regimental comrades whom he had summoned in order to have them act as his witnesses and notify his insulter of his intentions, "I do not consider drunkenness as offering an excuse. Furthermore, I have no use for whatever apologies M. de Megret might wish to offer and I would refuse to accept them should he actually do so. We shall either fight a duel or else, when we meet, I will be the one to assault him."

"I am at Count Werekiew's entire disposal," Jean de Megret had replied to these same witnesses when they had presented themselves to him. "I wish that my act had been a more elegant one, but I am quite unable to regret it."

The strange reply on the part of the youthful Frenchman had revealed a bitter feeling of resentment, the reason for which he confided later on only to his mother, when, following this unfortunate duel and dangerously wounded, he had told the poor woman all about it after she had, in mortal terror, hastened across the whole of Europe to his bedside.

"I realize, Mamma, that every individual is responsible for his own actions and that if I allowed myself to be tempted, for weeks at a time, to drink, gamble and lead an existence quite unworthy of me I alone am responsible. Yet in spite of this—had it not been for Werekiew—nothing of all this would have occurred. It is necessary for me to use expressions which will strike you as meaningless, but this man exerted an hypnotic influence over me. He was, in a word, my evil genius. I sensed this from the very beginning of our friendship. I loved him in spite of this, for he has many fine qualities which I am ready to recognize—even more readily now than before this evil spell had been shattered. But I also hate him because his will overruled mine in a manner I am unable clearly to define.

Furthermore, it is not only on me that he exerts this strange power concerning which I am tempted to say—as some one did who was speaking about him at the club—that there exists in his personality a magnetic power of allurements. It is quite necessary to have been intoxicated one's self to understand that drunkenness resembles sleep. This will enable you to understand the act I committed at the restaurant. You know as well as I do that in our dreams we constantly live a life which we deny ourselves in reality. Well then, when we are under the influence of alcohol, all the sentiments which our subconscious self refuses to accept are betrayed by our actions. Thus it was that on that night as I was seated there at the table amid all those men, women and noises and filled with deep remorse caused by my evil conduct, inspired by this man, I was suddenly overcome by a mad, unreasoning hatred and an irresistible yearning to deliver myself from this man's influence. . . . I was holding my glass up in front of me and then . . . It is quite impossible for me to regret what I have done and it is equally impossible for me to begrudge him what he did to me later on. This whole affair is indeed quite irreparable."

III

And what was it that Werekiew had done later on? The duel had been held under conditions which the young Russian had sought to render as atrocious as possible while still under the influence of one of those bursts of savage rage characteristic of the cultivated Russian whose make-up conceals a dormant, primitive instinct. The young Frenchman had agreed to them because of that spirit of pride which must be qualified as a national trait and which is responsible for the fact that a brave man does not wish to have his country humiliated through him. The two adversaries were to take up their positions twenty-five paces apart, each armed with a regulation army revolver, and were to approach each other firing at will. Jean de Megret had been shot at first and had been missed. Then it was that he had obeyed, almost instinctively, certain complex sentiments such as Werekiew had always inspired

him with. Had the aggression at the restaurant exhausted all his hatred in that it had completely satisfied its demands and had his affection for his aggressor's personality come to life again? Was it that his conscience had spoken anew and did he reproach himself for an act which had been as uncalled for as degrading and which no further incident had complicated? Did the idea of giving the other man a lesson in politeness, a desire to be "smart," as Werekiew—who prided himself on his French slang—would have said, have a direct bearing on this new move on his part which was as impulsive as the first had been?

In all events, tilting skyward the barrel of his weapon while Werekiew was taking fresh aim, he had fired into the air. He had then seen the Russian take a step forward, clenching his teeth and exhibiting an evil smirk. The shot had then been fired and Jean de Megret had fallen to the ground, having received the bullet full in the chest. This is what Werekiew had done. This is the unqualifiable deed that Jean had in mind when he repeated:

"No, I hold nothing against him."

"But it is not sufficient that you should bear him no hatred for this," Madame de Megret had answered. The surgeon had not concealed from her that her son was in grave danger. Religious as she was, she trembled lest an only too legitimate fit of anger should accompany him even into the grave; and so she added:

"You must forgive him. He is only partly responsible for the mad fury which overwhelmed him. You were depriving him of his vengeance. Because of your act he felt himself to be the inferior one. That enraged him. Tell me that you forgive him."

"I hold nothing against him, Mamma; don't ask anything more than that."

The mother did not dream that she herself was to give him the example of this effort at extending forgiveness which she demanded of her son—and this under the most painful of circumstances. A week had gone by since she had been in Saint Petersburg nursing the patient night and day. On this day in question the doctor had finally reassured her concerning the possible complications which

had at first been feared, and it was then that she had finally been able to take a little rest. A sentence uttered during this conversation with the doctor had surprised her. He had said:

"There is some one who will be almost as glad as you are, Madame, to learn that I can answer as to M. de Megret's life; it is the Count Wladimir Werekiew. I am going to join him downstairs where he is waiting for me as he does every morning and every afternoon I come here. If you could see the mortal dread in his eyes you would certainly forgive him."

"I have already forgiven him," the mother had answered.

"Do you authorize me to tell him this?"

"Yes, I give you my permission to do so."

It was after this that she was almost immediately destined to be shown that she had lied in good faith. She had gone to lie down on her bed to rest a little while. When she had arisen—it was then five o'clock in the afternoon—the French maid whom she had brought along with her entered the room with her face expressing great emotion and holding in her hand a card which she presented to her mistress, saying:

"This gentleman asks if Madame la Comtesse is disposed to receive him. Of course I did not want to encourage him, Madame, but then he pleaded so earnestly and I could see the tears in his eyes . . . In all events I trust that Madame will forgive me. . . ."

"You have but done your duty, Julie," replied Madame de Megret, "where is this gentleman?"

"He is waiting at the foot of the stairs."

"You may show him into the salon of the clinic."

When giving these directions she looked at the calling card (she, too, with astonishment and disgust) on which was engraved the name of Jean's would-be murderer. So Wladimir Werekiew wished to see her! And she had already accepted. But why? An invincible feeling of curiosity obliged her to go downstairs in order to have before her very eyes and in actual reality this person who had just played such an all-important rôle in her son's existence.

At that time Werekiew was just twenty-five years old.

It seemed as if all the grace of the Slavic race had been poured into his veins. The spiritual expression of his features, his slender form, the elegance of his whole bearing and the almost effeminate graciousness of his manners were in such vivid contrast to the idea which Jean's mother had formed of this fast-liver that she had found herself quite disconcerted while at the same time Werekiew had said to her with an imploring look in his eyes and in a voice trembling with emotion:

"Madame, I am aware that Jean is going to recover; doubtlessly you will soon take him back to France with you. As for me I am obliged to leave Saint Petersburg within forty-eight hours. It has been all in vain that two of the Grand Dukes have interceded in my behalf. To punish me the Emperor is sending me into the Caucasian district. This is but justice. I should not like to depart without having asked Jean to forgive me. He has the right, and you as well, Madame, to consider me as a murderer. I don't know what came over me on the field of encounter. I was quite out of my mind. There had been this insult in full public, in front of these women. . . . I have the right to tell you that I was in love with one of them. I imagined that Jean appealed to her and I was jealous. . . . But after all, Madame, what is the good of all these explanations? I regret it with all my heart and I will be relieved, to a certain extent, only after having said all this to Jean. The repentance of a man like me who begs forgiveness is an act which counts for something. If he forgives me I shall depart with one weight less upon my heart."

For a long time he had continued pleading in this manner, speaking with impressive affection concerning the man he had wished to kill and explaining with touching ingenuity what qualities had attracted him to this comrade of his. He explained to what an extent Jean had delighted him by his youthful enthusiasm, his straightforwardness and the spontaneousness of his nature. He had interested himself in the entire childhood of his new-found friend and in their country life in that land far to the west. He was familiar with the name of the estate where the Megret-Fajacs spent a part of the year and also with certain details concern-

ing their faithful old servitors. It was quite evident that with the characteristic suppleness of the Russian disposition which is lovable because of its spontaneousness this officer of the Guards had adapted himself mentally to that little region in far-off France, a fact which had not prevented him from tempting his comrade into a certain mode of living which was as different as it could possibly have been from the sphere and form of education natural to his friend. The mother had before her eyes the evidence that he nourished a genuine affection for her son. She was finally induced to say:

"Well, Sir, I will go to see if Jean is in a condition to receive you."

She went upstairs to the patient's room. When she had repeated to him the gist of this interview and mentioned Werekiew's request the wounded man immediately gave proof of the most determined resolution:

"No, Mamma, I do not wish to receive him. His image will be forever associated with my recollection of a moral degeneracy which causes me too much shame. I would never have believed myself capable of leading, for two whole months, and solely because of this man, such a filthy and disgusting existence. You see that I do not mince my words. All I can do is not to begrudge him what he did. I have already told you this; but if I were to see him again I sense that I would betray a movement of hatred. Even now I have lost that feeling of peace and calm which came to me after I had confessed myself."

Having felt very badly he had, indeed, expressed the desire to see a priest, and his mother, who had not dared speak to him about this, had been greatly comforted.

"Find some way not to ruffle him, Mamma," he concluded, "but I really can't see him."

The mother had carried this message of refusal back to Werekiew. She had anticipated a discussion which did not occur. Wladimir with lowered head had taken his leave, broken down, resigned and accepting the situation, only to come back again the following day under such different conditions that Madame de Megret after all these years was still nonplused, although some of the many

anecdotes on the Russian revolution had demonstrated to her to what an extent moral fickleness comprises one of the characteristics of the Muscovite soul which Occidentals will never be able completely to fathom.

Towards five o'clock in the afternoon the same maid as before had entered the room in which the invalid and his mother were located. She appeared to be even more affected than on the previous day.

"Madame," she had said as soon as she had entered the room, "Madame!"

"What is the matter, Julie?" Jean had inquired, aroused by her looks and the tone of her voice.

"I have something to say to Madame," she had stuttered.

"I will come directly," Madame de Megret had replied. Then, turning to her son, she had exclaimed: "Our poor Julie has quite lost her head since she has been in this Russian clinic; I am quite sure that she must have committed another blunder!"

She followed Julie, who, no sooner had the door been shut, exclaimed:

"Madame, it has to do with the gentleman who . . ." With this she pointed to Jean's chamber. "My, how he frightened me! I like Madame very much indeed, but I won't accompany her again into this country! . . . Ah! here he is now! . . ."

The figure of Wladimir Werekiew appeared on the stairs. He climbed the steps, holding on to the balustrade. He was completely intoxicated. His comrades in the regiment had tendered him a farewell dinner, and, despite the terrible lesson which the duel should have taught him, he had permitted himself to indulge in his favorite vice. And now he arrived here dominated by the same phenomenon which had been responsible for Jean's aggression, and which our ancestors designated by the now popular proverb: "*In vene veritas*." The predominating idea in his mind at this moment—that of obtaining his adversary's forgiveness—had taken possession of his entire being and a mere impulse had caused him to hasten to this house. He was climbing the stairs repeating aloud:

"I must see Jean, I must see Jean!"

"That is quite impossible, Sir," exclaimed the mother, advancing towards him. "My son is resting and he is unable to see you."

"Well, then, I'll wait here until he wakes up," retorted the drunkard, seated himself on the top step. "My train does not leave until midnight. Jean will certainly wake up before then."

"Please go away," pleaded the mother. Then, imperatively, "I forbid you to remain there."

"Hold on there," muttered the young man. "I, on the other hand, forbid you to address me in that manner. I'm no moujik! . . ." Saying this, he had stood up at full height and had begun raising his voice when, suddenly, he had stopped. . . . The door had just been swung open and Jean had appeared to view. He had taken only time enough to slip on his wrapper. On one side he saw his terrified mother and on the other the maid, while standing between them, upright and with wild, staring eyes, was Werekiew. Without a word Jean motioned to him to go downstairs, pointing his arm and fixing him with his gaze. As though hypnotized by the attitude of the wounded man who was still dreadfully pale and almost ready to faint, the drunken man actually began backing down the stairs, holding on to the railing without taking his glance from that of his friend's, who was thus able to see him take his head in his hands and break out weeping as soon as he had reached the ground floor.

IV

These were the visions developing themselves in the mind of Madame de Megret while the taxi was crossing the Place de la Concorde, descending the rue de Rivoli and skirting the boulevards leading to the toy shop. When she arrived there she was astounded to hear the chauffeur reply, after she had inquired if he could wait for her: "Certainly, Madame la Comtesse." Once again she examined him attentively. Her first impression had not deceived her. This time she had no difficulty in recognizing—already marked by age and suffering—the features of the once stunning officer of the Guards and elegant

night-lifer of Saint Petersburg. Her surprise was indeed such that she neglected to acknowledge this form of salutation which suggested that this man also recognized her and she had passed on into the shop.

Under any other circumstances but this she would have hesitated in front of the innumerable objects which encumbered the stands and various shelves. Doubtlessly she would have asked herself which toys would afford the greatest amusement to her little grandchildren and just what trait should be encouraged in them. Numerous were the toys suggestive of war: cannons, battleships, machine-guns, tanks and even an aeroplane carrying a rag doll aviator with his parachute! Doubtlessly, too, the sight of these things would have stirred within her heart the impressions endured during the four terrible years during which her son had never left the front. How many little boys were destined to maneuver these inoffensive machines and thus outline, unknown to them, their own future fate should evil days decree that the tragic ordeal should begin once more! But at present a stream of mothers of future soldiers and of future widows revolved around these toys which would last for only one season. Almost all of them were young, elegant, and some of them were known to Madame Megret whom they attempted to detain as she passed along. But she was not in a mood to pause and visit with them. She took the time only to pick out an electric train with its station, tunnel and signals, which was destined for Andre—her grandson—and, for his sister Yvonne, a magnificent Alsatian doll in native costume along with her little farmhouse with its traditional stork perched on the chimney. She also gave herself the time to stop at the desk in order to give her name and the indications as to how the package should be sent by the Embassy-pouch, after which she re-entered the taxi after having given her home address. She was impatient, this time, for the taxi to go even faster, in order to have the explanation of the enigma suggested by the presence—on this driver's seat and engaged in such an employment as this—of the once highly popular Russian idol, victimized, no doubt, by the revolution after undreamt-of adventures!

When the auto finally drew up in front of her house it was not necessary for her to question her son's former companion. The latter had sprung from his seat to open the door for her as soon as the car had slowed down. Then and there—as if they had been in the main reception hall of the Newski palace and not on a pavement of a street in Paris, all sloppy from the snow which had already been trampled into a dirty mire, and he, clothed in his grand-gala uniform instead of in this frayed chauffeur's attire—he kissed Madame de Megret's hand, exclaiming ceremoniously:

"Madame la Comtesse, I never hoped to have the opportunity of presenting my excuses for that moment of mad folly which you saw me give way to in your presence already some ten years ago. I offer them to you now and I should very much like to have some news about Jean . . . But I see that you are in mourning! . . ."

"I have lost a brother-in-law," she responded. "Thanks to God's graciousness, my son came back from the war without even having been wounded."

"He was more fortunate than I was," said Werekiew. "I took part in the first campaign in Eastern Prussia—that of Rennenkampf—and I came very near never returning."

He brushed back his hair and showed a scar high on his brow which he concealed under a lock of gray hair.

"A burst of shrapnel," he explained, adding philosophically: "It might have been better had it penetrated deeper. . . . But if Jean is alive would it be possible for me to see him again?"

"He is in South America now," said the mother, "and still in the Diplomatic Corps."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Werekiew. "You relieve me of a great weight, Madame. I was told that he had been obliged to resign because of our affair together."

"No, he was only forced to take a vacation, and his splendid conduct during the war permitted him to make a brilliant reëntry."

"Is he married?"

"Yes, and he even has two adorable children for whom

I have just purchased some toys. And how about you?"

"Oh! as for me," said Werekiew, "after having been wounded I spent many weary months in a hospital and later on resumed my service. I went into action again in the Carpathians. Then the revolution broke out. They robbed me of all my belongings! Then I joined Wrangel's army. After that I found myself penniless in Paris and thoroughly disgusted with everything. Then, in order not to ask anything of any one I . . . Look there! . . ." With this he pointed to his taxi.

"But," said Madame de Megret, "things can't continue in this manner. It is no kind of a situation! . . . Inasmuch as fate has made me meet you again . . ."

"Madame," he interrupted, "things *must* go on like this. I have done a lot of thinking, you may be sure, and I feel that we Russians must atone—first of all for our own sins and then for those of all Russia. Yes, it is absolutely necessary that we should be humiliated." His features had undergone a great change and a strange light—almost religious—shone in his eyes. "Yes," he repeated, "I said humiliated. I am humiliated already and it *must* continue to be so!"

While still speaking he had climbed onto the driver's seat and had started the motor. The tone in which he had uttered the unexpected declaration had been impressively sincere, profound and affecting. Madame de Megret contemplated him without finding anything to reply. Her billfold was in her muff and she drew it out saying to him:

"But in all events you will allow me to . . ."

Werekiew looked at her and said in a completely altered tone of voice:

"The meter indicates fifteen francs fifty."

Then, as she had held out to him a hundred-franc bill, he continued:

"No, Madame, only fifteen fifty with a small tip if you feel so inclined."

She put away her hundred-franc bill. She sensed that real charity consisted in not offending this pride of earning one's living which was so mystically accepted; so, tak-

ing eighteen francs from her purse, she handed them to the chauffeur, who quietly replied.

"You have understood what I mean, Madame. Thank you."

With these words he drove rapidly down the street. The snow was falling so thickly that Madame de Megret, who was trying at least to distinguish the license number, was quite unable to do so.

V

This little story would not be complete if I did not add the commentary offered by an engineer who had escaped from the Soviet prisons and who had passed twenty years in the factories at Moscow. I had just told him about Madame de Megret-Fajac's adventure. I had heard it directly from her. But I had added that it was only on this account that I did not doubt it.

"But what will you say," my companion replied unmoved, "if you ever behold all Russia imitate Werekiew and prostrate itself before the memory of its Tsar Nicholas II under the influence of an immense wave of collective repentance? This is one of the results I anticipate from the present reign of criminal madness. The Russian soul is thus constituted. Thus it is that among all the ill-fated Russians such as Werekiew and among all those who have suffered the greatest—filled as they are with impulses which lead them to commit the lowest of deeds as well as the noblest of eccentricities—when they sense that they are guilty they are filled with a mad desire to expiate their sins and to be humiliated. Unfortunately this zeal is but momentary. It undergoes vast changes. I am not sure but that it was all for the best that Madame de Megret was unable to make out the license number. She might have desired to find Werekiew again to help him. She might have found some other employment for him and given him some money. He might have refused again and then finally accepted. And then with this money he might have become again the Werekiew of old. Ah! how changeable they are, but also how capable they are of noble, spontaneous deeds!

I have given up trying to judge or understand them. They have kept me in an underground cell for eighteen months as you know, but I have not been able to cease loving them."

GRIBICHE

By FREDERIC BOUTET

(From *Les Œuvres Libres*)

PART ONE

"GRIBICHE, hurry up. Let's run. It will warm us up and, besides, we are late."

Anna Belot took her son by the hand as she spoke. Together they ran gaily along the crowded street, prematurely darkened by the mist of the December evening. Gribiche looked almost like Anna's brother, for he was exceptionally tall for his ten years, while Anna, in her black cloak, looked like a schoolgirl.

Out of breath, the mother and son arrived at the corner of the rue Lecourbe. Anna pushed open the glass door, cast her eyes around the room and, recognizing the friends she was seeking, made for a little table at which two women and a man were already seated. Gribiche followed his mother. The novelty of even this modest restaurant life delighted him. Everything was new and wonderful; the warmth and light of the room, the acrid but agreeable smell of *choucroute*, which pervaded the restaurant, the boisterous laugh of the customers, the coming and going of the waiters.

The man arose from the table to greet the young mother.

"Good evening, M. Gavary," said Anna.

"You call this coming early?" said he in a low voice.

"Well, I was busy," she answered in the same tone. "I took the opportunity offered by the Saturday half-holiday to polish my floors."

Gribiche, just behind, his hands in his pockets, his round face expressionless from the cold in the street, looked around in the restaurant with an air of contentment.

And you have brought your youngster," continued Gavary.

Anna shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, I could not kill him, the little 'un. And to leave him all alone on a Saturday evening! Oh, I would rather not have come."

The man did not insist. His ill-temper had passed and he was already afraid that he had offended the young woman.

"Come along, Gribiche, come, my boy," he said in a friendly tone.

Anna cast a grateful glance at her friend. He smiled in return, his teeth gleaming under his red moustache. They went to the table where the two women were waiting—the one, Louissette, a full-blown fair creature, young, painted, and gay; the other, Mademoiselle Merlet, an old maid, with youthful ideas, eccentric, well dressed, and of a jolly disposition. Both of them worked at Javel in the same factory with Anna. Philip Gavary, a well built fellow between thirty-two and thirty-five, was the foreman of their workshop and he had the characteristic appearance of the now prosperous Parisian workman—a dark suit, clean collar, necktie well knotted and bowler hat.

He watched Anna take off her cloak. How pretty she was! He admired her svelte figure; her fair, almost iridescent hair, neatly bobbed; her keen, intelligent, Parisian features; her large eyes, a little blackened with *khol*; her cheeks powdered, and her red lips, which hid pearl-white teeth from view. He admired also her new black dress cut low with red trimmings which harmonized nicely with the little patent leather shoes of many buckles.

Anna spent a great deal on her dress and she was quite justified in so doing for she was very pretty. Certainly, in spite of the fact that she received a good salary at the factory, she must have deprived herself of many necessities of life. She did not, however, neglect her son. One had only to look at him, this vigorous and contented little chap, the son of a husband now dead five years, to know that.

Gavary was often jealous. The idea that Anna had belonged to another was odious to him. It annoyed him to see this quiet, funny boy, always of equal temper, very friendly and witty.

Anna sat down between Mlle. Merlet, who wore a simple blue dress, and Louise, who boasted of a most expensive green silk frock. Gavary and Gribiche sat down on the other side of the table.

"We are not too late," exclaimed Anna, with a half-flippant air. "The Vendrots are not yet here."

"Quite right! You are early, as always," came the voice of the overseer, making an effort to laugh. "How, then, will something suit you? What will you take?"

"A quinquina," was Anna's laconic reply. "The boy will drink from my glass."

Gribiche looked a trifle ashamed at this last phrase, but Gavary shrugged his shoulders and beckoned to the waiter.

"Two quinquinas, well prepared," he ordered, "one for Madame and one for the young man."

"And for you, Mesdames?" turning to Louise and Mlle. Merlet.

Buxom Louise's voice came without hesitation: "A Turin."

"It is a lot," replied Mlle. Merlet, excusingly, "but one cannot refuse you. Then, if you please, a little byrrh."

"And for me, a strawberry vermouth . . . but, hold! there are the Vendrots. Wait a minute, waiter!"

Entered the Vendrots: a stout man with a blotched face, and wearing a brown overcoat and soft hat; a thin woman, flat, and of sour aspect.

"How warm it is here!" was Madame Vendrot's greeting. "No, no," waving away an offer of wine, "we will take nothing before dinner time."

She did, however, accept a quinquina because it was sweet, and her husband, with determined mien, swallowed one after the other two grenadine bitters while giving Gavary, who had asked him how business was, details about the printing press which he owned.

"We are all here now," Gavary proceeded. "And we can dine. I have engaged a table at the end of the room. Waiter!" he called, "an extra place for this young man." Then to Anna:

"I thought you told me he could dine with his aunt, but it is perhaps as well that you have brought him."

Anna Belot smiled at him again, drew her son to her and, with a maternal touch, smoothed his hair.

"We shall have to hurry our dinner to be in time for the cinema," interjected Vendrot.

"Why, there is plenty of time. You are always in a hurry," protested his wife.

With that, the group moved to the tables where places had been prepared for them and studiously observed the menu.

"If agreeable to the ladies," said Gavary, who had the habit of quick decision, "we will take some Portugaises (oysters), stewed kidneys, mushrooms and chicken sauté; and to drink, some beer. How does that suit?"

"Very well, very well," was the chorus, with the exception of Vendrot. He was too accustomed to monotonous simplicity at home to spend a festal evening with plebeian food.

"What do you say to a dozen snails after the oysters?" he suggested.

Mme. Vendrot was indignant.

"You are an idiot," she declared, "your eyes are larger than your stomach. We have too much already."

Dinner commenced. The guests, their napkins tucked well under their chins, swallowed the oysters with much gusto. Then came the five dozen snails.

Gribiche was delighted with his good luck in participating in the dinner. He managed to eat more than a dozen snails by helping himself to the portion of Louise, who did not dare like any dish containing garlic. Mlle. Merlet, with whom food was more important than beauty, succeeded, however, in doing almost as well as Gribiche—and without any one noticing her.

The life of the party was Philip Gavary. Despite his grammar-school education, he liked to hear himself using big words. He had seen an historic film several days before and now he told about it in detail. Some centuries before the Revolution, it seemed, people were actually burned to death with sulphur and molten lead in the Place de Greve. The Place de Greve. . . .

At this point Gribiche interrupted the historian. Like

all children Gribiche became much excited at dramatic tales of other times.

"I know. I have read about molten lead thrown over people's heads, but where was the Place de Greve?"

Gavary did not hesitate.

"It was the Place du Chatelet. The scaffold used to be on the site of the fountain. There were horrors under the 'ancient régime.' . . ."

"How well he talks," whispered Anna admiringly in the ear of her neighbor, Louisette. "It is no wonder for he is always poking into books."

"There goes eight o'clock. We must hurry up for the cinema," declared Vendrot, who did not esteem very highly Gavary's historical prowess.

"Why, there is plenty of time, it is not raining. You are a nuisance with your perpetual hurry," said Mme. Vendrot acidly.

She had just spilt a bit of sauce on her light-colored glove and she felt the need of quarreling with her husband, guilty on principle of everything annoying that happened.

Vendrot shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't care," he answered, "we are all very well here. Why, I spoke only because you grumble when you do not see the beginning of the show."

He helped himself to some chicken and went on eating whilst casting sly glances at Louisette's firm white skin which contrasted sharply with the yellowish neck of his wife, revealed indiscreetly by her low-cut dress.

The latter quickly perceived this movement and resented it. However, Philip Gavary, animated by the love he felt for Anna and put in good-humor by the excellence of the repast, desired once more to show good-will towards Gribiche, and commanded attention. In a friendly way, he took hold of the boy with his large, strong hand.

"Well, my man, how do you get on at school?"

"He is first this week," said Anna with pride.

"That is fine," said Gavary, who felt in his waistcoat and gave a franc to Gribiche.

"Then you are happy, things go well," he said.

"Yes, M. Gavary. Thank you, M. Gavary," said Gribiche.

"And today an extraordinary adventure happened to him," continued Anna. "He found a lady's bag."

"A lady's bag? How was that? Where did he find it? And what happened?"

All were exceedingly interested.

Gribiche, with his mouth full, spoke:

"It was at the *Trois Quartiers*. There was a fine lady making purchases."

"What were you doing at the *Trois Quartiers*?" demanded Gavary, astonished.

"It was after school. I went to have a look," said Gribiche. "It was beautiful because of the New Year's festivities."

"Then what took place," demanded Mlle. Merlet, curious.

"Come along, tell us," said Anna.

"Well, I found this bag," simply said Gribiche. Naturally not a great talker, he was much occupied in dipping a crust of bread in the chicken sauté gravy.

Anna spoke for him.

"It was like this," she exclaimed. "A lady had left her gold bag on the counter from which it fell on the floor. And the boy saw it and picked it up and he ran after the lady and caught her as she was getting into her motor car. And he returned it to her."

"It is quite right to have returned it like that," said Mlle. Merlet.

"But what! Do you think he was going to keep it?" exclaimed Anna.

"Of course, it was natural," said Gavary.

"What do you think he should have done?" demanded Louisette.

"What an adventure," said Vendrot. "These lost things often get you into trouble. I once . . ."

His wife interrupted him. This story did not interest her, so she said sharply:

"You know the cinema has commenced."

"Hello, it is you who are in a hurry now," retorted Vendrot.

"What was there in the bag? Did you open it?" demanded Louissette of Gribiche.

"Yes, I opened it just a little to see. It was full of gold things and some notes. . . . What a packet! And it smelt good."

"And the lady, was she nice?"

"I should think she was. And then the furs, and the motor car."

"And what did she say to you? She did not give you anything?"

"She asked him his name and his address," explained Anna. "And she said she would come to see us."

"Certainly to make a present to the boy," said Gavary.

"We shall see," said Gribiche, shrugging his shoulders slightly.

Dinner was finished, coffee served. The napkins were taken out of the waistcoats and corsages which they had protected from irreparable damage by gravy spots. The men lighted cigarettes. Gavary offered some mild ones to the ladies. Anna and Louissette accepted. Vendrot called the waiter and ordered liqueurs. There were protestations. Mme. Vendrot and Anna did not wish for liqueurs. Mlle. Merlet thought that brandy was too strong and suggested anisette. Louissette ordered cherry brandy, which appeared the utmost chic to Vendrot, who, a little intoxicated, despising the powers of his wife, made almost open advances to the young woman of which she took no notice.

Mme. Vendrot, stiff, exasperated, a little logy, did not say a word. Her calm was always the forerunner of a storm.

When the bill came there was a slight discussion as to who should settle it. Philip Gavary wished to pay, but the others protested. No, no; each one, his share, that is how it is always done. It was still better. . . . Vendrot, wishing to appear generous in front of Louissette, said gallantly that it was not to be like that. The men had invited the ladies and, therefore, they would divide the bill. But Mme. Vendrot cast an awe-inspiring glance at her husband while the other women protested. Finally, Gavary, who had paid for the drinks before dinner, paid for a third of

the bill, Vendrot another third, and the three ladies divided the remaining third between them.

The cinema was just around the corner. They were there in a moment but not before Mme. Vendrot had a chance to hint to her husband that she was waiting until they returned home to tell him what she thought about his actions.

No particular incident marked the two hours they passed at the cinema. A dramatic film gave Gavary the opportunity for certain bits of philosophy; a sprightly film drew from Vendrot some dangerous jokes that his wife, indignant at the idea that they were intended for Louise, suppressed by poking him with her elbow.

After the cinema Gavary proposed refreshments but Mme. Vendrot refused; she was feeling ill, she had had enough. If Vendrot would not go home, she could go alone. Vendrot did not dare to agree to this generous offer. His wife took him by the arm and, without giving him even the time to bid farewell to his friends, and to Louise in particular, dragged him off.

"What is the matter?" queried Louise with an air of innocence.

Gavary shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, they are good people. Vendrot is a friend of mine since childhood. But they are always squabbling like that."

"Mme. Vendrot is a cat," observed Gribiche precociously.

The company ordered some glasses of beer and, having quenched their thirst, set out for Grenelle where they all lived.

Philip and Anna led the way along the deserted streets, followed by Mlle. Merlet, Louise, and Gribiche.

After some time, Philip broke out. "I have had enough of this," he whispered.

"Hush," cautioned Anna, "some one will hear us."

"No. Let's walk a bit more quickly and they can't hear us. I tell you, I have had enough of it. We can't go on like this."

Anna pretended not to understand.

"But you see me every day at the factory and this evening," she replied.

"I don't mean that. You know as well as I do what I mean. You make fun of me. You take advantage of the fact that I love you. Well, you're wrong. I love you just enough to know where I am going. Don't I mean anything in your life, Anna dear?"

It was not the distinguished artisan who spoke, conscious of the weight of his words and of the enormous importance of his position. It was a man who in simple words sought to express the great depths of his love. But the last sentence offended Anna.

"What! You say you are nothing. What sort of a woman do you think I am? Do you think I would permit you to take me in your arms if I did not love you?"

She slowed down her pace to permit the others to rejoin them.

He excused himself contritely. "No, it isn't that that I wanted to say. Walk faster, Anna, I beg of you. What I meant to say was that I love you and that I have never been able to tell you so. I never thought I could become as mad. I have read in dime novels about men losing their heads but I always thought it was just bosh. I didn't know. I'll tell you I'm worse than those stories. Why, sometimes I go out in the evening just to pass by where you are living. Oh, I'm leading a miserable existence."

"Come, be reasonable," said Anna, trying to calm him.

"All the same I want you to know that I love you," he said. "How could I love any one else but you? I adore you. I want you so. I have seen so little of the world that perhaps I may flirt from time to time with other girls. What does that mean? Nothing. They are merely the passing fantasies of youth."

His last words evidently displeased Anna, for a shadow dimmed her face as she spoke:

"Philip," and her voice quavered. "You say you love me, that you are jealous of others who see me . . . you wonder if I go out at night . . . if I have other friends. Philip, it is a good thing to have friends. But I have none, neither do I go abroad in the evening, seeking pleasure. There is nothing that should displease you. But your suspicion vexes me. It would vex any woman."

A short silence fell. Behind the couple, Louisette and Mlle. Merlet were deep in discussion of workshop occurrences. Gribiche, left to himself, alone was conscious that the dark was growing heavier and the streets more deserted. Unconsciously he drew nearer to his mother, strains of a popular song echoing on his pursed lips; his hands in his pocket.

"Philip, listen to me," broke out Anna, ending the silence and edging nearer to her companion. "It hurts me to see you like this. Do be reasonable."

"Reasonable!" and the man's exclamation was uttered half in anger, half in despair. "Reasonable! When I feel like this! When my heart is aching with misery! And you—you do not even try to understand. It is certain, you do not love me."

In the brooding eyes that he turned toward her, Anna saw the glimmer of tears. Her woman's heart was touched that he should be so moved.

"Philip," her voice came softly, like a wind among the fallen leaves. "I love you, also. I love you with all my strength. And never, in my life, have I loved any one like this. But I cannot always be going to your house . . . would you want me talked about, as though I were a bad woman?"

"But why will you not marry me? Do you not know that I love you, love you dearly? And all that is mine I will give to you."

"The boy, Philip. It is because of him that I refuse your proposal. Already your heart detests and despises him because of this unreasonable jealousy."

"Anna, I do not detest the lad. He is a nice boy, a very nice boy."

"You do your best, I know, to be kind to him, and that touches me very much. But were we married, you and I, you could make him unhappy without wishing to do so. He could make you unhappy, too, and between the two of you I should be wretched, wretched and miserable."

"But this cannot go on forever. Even the thought of it is unbearable. Think of it, even in small things you refuse to let me do what I yearn to do; even when I arrange

a dinner, and you come to please me, I do not have the privilege of paying your part."

"But I have my dignity," and Anna's height seemed to increase. "I cannot have the appearance of being kept by you . . ."

A voice, Louissette's, interrupted. "I say, this is my home."

Louissette's departure from the group once more placed all members together, and thus they continued homeward, putting an end to the conversation that had waxed so sorrowfully between Anna and the one who professed so fervently to love her. And when, in turn, Anna entered her abode, her arm in that of Gribiche, Gavary turned away to play the part of a courtier for Mlle. Merlet.

Sunday morning saw Anna idly lying abed, basking in the thought that here was one day of the week when the workshop had no claim to her. In winter, above all seasons, she relished these lazy mornings, and now, after raking the fire in the wood-burning stove in the adjoining dining room, and calling a greeting to Gribiche, she hastened joyously again to her bed.

Her thoughts conjured up yesterday, in a vivid caldron of memories. She recalled the events of the evening, lingering longest on the homeward journey with Philip. His words haunted her. She was troubled, tormented, and she moved half-feverishly as she recalled the pain that had been mirrored in his face. She heard again his deep voice, trembling with emotion; a tremor ran through her as she recalled the eyes wet with a strong man's tears.

It pleased Anna that she had the power thus to inspire to emotion this man whom she was accustomed to see cool and authoritative in the factory where, as a just overseer and a diligent worker, he was respected by all. This feeling of pride had grown from that first evening when it had first leapt in her heart.

It was on Swan Island, when Philip had first spoken to her of love, and the April afternoon, approaching its end, was languorous and intoxicating as a summer evening.

Anna's first surprise quickly gave way to pleasure. And

was she not free? But the image of Gribiche, Gribiche so gentle and affectionate, gay and yet so serious, loomed within her mind. Gribiche she loved as mother, sister, comrade; theirs was a mutual confidence that was, without her formulating the fact, the joy and moral support of the young mother's laborious existence.

Never would she wish to bring pain or grief to Gribiche. Never could she permit anything that, in his developing intelligence, would cause the boy to despise her or steal from him some of the honest, clean, warm affection with which he enriched her life.

And yet, without analyzing or thinking much of love, she felt confusedly that she stood in need of it; above all, need of protection and a man's affection. But again came the image of Gribiche, as though in warning, and she had said to the overseer, courageously trying to laugh, that she was too old, and that she was not free: the mother of a family. Certainly she was deeply touched by his avowal, but between them there must be nothing but friendship and good fellowship.

Their hours together were brief and rare, but gradually the woman seemed to draw more closely within the man's affections. The thought of her child clung close to her, like a guardian; yet, thinking of the insistence of her lover, she suddenly shuddered and, perplexity and a hint of regret wrinkling her brow, she admitted to herself that she had changed, that she loved Philip now with deep and yearning tenderness.

It was not a sudden revelation; she had realized it inwardly for weeks, but the gray clouds with which she had tried to shroud it had been cleared suddenly away. What would have been her answer if Gribiche, if Louissette, if Mlle. Merlet had not been there?

"Sometimes I might go with others—why not?" taunted his voice in memory, and jealousy, throbbing and relentless, gripped her.

Pale, wondering, heartsick, she sat up in her bed. "No, no, it was not possible he would do that," she said to herself in agitation. "He knows well I love him. He loves me so very much . . . loves me."

A sigh escaped her lips as she reflected for a moment and then said slowly, as though in fear:

"Who knows . . . who knows?" But even as she said it, memory created anew the memory of her father, and how he had made her mother happy; her sister Celina passing days of felicity at a loving husband's side, and how she herself, after youthful and harmless flirtations with young men of her station, had married and found in her husband, before death from pneumonia had taken him, a cordial and devoted being who had taken fond care of her and treated her with respect and paternal indulgence.

A quick, sharp knock sounded at the door and Anna, hastily leaving her bed, quickly donned a tidy dress that served for indoor service and marketing purposes.

"Yes, yes, in a minute," she responded, as the knocks impatiently were repeated. And with quick, dexterous touches she patted her disordered hair into place.

A woman, fairly tall, still young, and exceedingly chic, stood at the door, and a cultured, musical voice, with a faint trace of accent, asked:

"I wish to find the boy named Belot. Is he here?"

"The woman of the *Trois Quartiers*, and surely a foreigner," was Anna's silent thought, as aloud she replied:

"The boy is here. I am his mother."

"Ah, yes. Then I wish to speak to you," and accepting the invitation of her hostess, the visitor crossed the narrow, dim ante-chamber and entered one of the two rooms of the little lodging that served Anna and the young Gribiche as home.

About the newcomer was a distinctive charm that marked her at once as a woman of wealth and breeding. Her face was beautiful; her finely molded figure was luxuriously gowned. A naïve artistry had accentuated her beauty. Her slender neck rose gracefully from a mantle of sable and was wound about with three rows of pearls that softly shone in the shallow light of the winter day.

Anna's thoughts, womanlike, were flitting tensely from detail to detail of her guest's appearance.

"How chic . . . like a picture. Those pearls, if they are real . . . and they must be! And that perfume . . . and

those furs. How exquisite that gown!" Once again was Anna in the rôle of a little Cinderella Parisienne, vaguely classifying blissful luxuries on careless exhibit.

"The boy, then, is your son, Madame?" interjected the musical voice.

"Yes, to be sure," Anna responded. "Gribiche is my only child, and I work at Cartier's factory."

"Gribiche?" and the woman's slender brows, peeping fashionably from beneath her dexterously tilted hat, marked the query.

"Yes, the little one. His real name is Jules but every one calls him Gribiche—a nickname. It is because he resembles the player in a film at the cinema, and there was one who observed the likeness."

The obscurity of such explanation evidently lost itself on the visitor.

"Gribiche is amusing," she began. "I am rather sorry that he is your only child, but perhaps, even so, it will not matter. I have something to say that may interest you. You know, of course, that yesterday he found and returned to me my bag?"

"Oh to be sure, he would return it to you," said the mother, not a little pride in her voice, for surely was not this a sign of fine breeding?

"Yes, certainly, but even so, such an event is rare. With your boy it is, I am sure, as much natural instinct to display such honesty and courtesy as any education given by you. He said to me, and in quite the same tone as yours: 'I have only done what I should do for any one.' And he was so grave and dignified that I laughed as I admired him. I was greatly pleased to recover the bag, which I had carelessly lost, for I prize it as a keepsake."

A momentary pause, and she continued:

"I am Edith Maranet, and I am an American, of New York. However, my husband, now dead, was French, managing the affairs of my father's bank in this country, and the charm of old France has kept me here. In Paris, my home is on the rue Erlanger, at Auteuil.

"But, Madame, listen carefully now to me. I have no

child. I was struck with admiration by the action of this boy, your son. I am deeply interested in your Gribiche, deeply interested. I have deliberated the matter, with the thought that such extraordinary quality, so fine, so sincere, so disinterested, must surely denote a personality capable of doing good, and worthy of splendid existence. This, then, is what I have to say, Madame Belot. If I were to adopt your son, it would be an excellent thing for him, for me, and for society."

A sudden sword thrust plunged into the mother's heart. "Adopt Gribiche!" Anna's voice was like a cry of fear in the night. Was the woman mad? She stared wide-eyed and pallid.

"Madame, I beg of you, do not upset yourself like this," the suave voice of the American continued. "I wish to adopt your son, but do not think that this is a mere caprice. My friends frequently tell me that I am impulsive, but that is because I reach decisions quickly. Why hesitate when the matter is logical? I observed the boy yesterday, doing unassumingly a noble act; I see you, his mother, before me at this moment. I know how to judge people quickly. I am willing to adopt your son, Madame, and I will do so, if you and he are willing. I will give him the best education a woman with money and interest can give; he will be, then, prepared to fill an excellent social rôle and to become a man useful to men. I am so rich that my fortune should, at least in part, find philanthropic employment, and I take keen interest in the laws of evolution of human relations towards a better civilization."

Anna, her tempestuous thoughts somewhat calmed during the woman's discourse, sought now to debate the matter logically.

To part with Gribiche . . . is it madness to do that? to place him in the trust of this woman, of whom she knew nothing except. . . . What, after all, is schooling and riches? No longer, then, would her Gribiche, her little baby now growing up, be hers, hers to fondle and to confide to, in dark hours and in gay.

The anguish lay like a stone in her heart.

The stranger's eyes, beautiful and understanding, were fixed intently upon the mother and the thoughts made lights and shadows, chasing each other like in a game of hide-and-seek, across her brow.

"She really looks very kind and charitable, almost motherly," reflected Anna. "Gribiche certainly would be happy with her. Have I, after all, the right to deprive him of a worthwhile life? Of success? Of fortune and happiness?"

"You would often see the boy," broke in the foreigner's voice, even softer and smoother now as she seemed to divine that the mother's heart was turning toward consent. "Do not think that you would lose him entirely, and I will make of him one of whom you will be proud, a personality who will have the power and the will to create the useful. In the few words we exchanged yesterday, the lad and I, he seemed to me, beyond his disinterested and admirable probity, a boy of unusual ability to reason and of alert and fine intelligence."

"It is true that he is very intelligent," and again pride mastered the wistful perplexity of the factory worker's tone. "In that he is not wanting."

"Surely, then, it is necessary that this intelligence should be developed and made serviceable. Would it not be selfish of you to deprive the lad of what will mean so much to him, and the world that which he will be able to give and which it so much needs? He will easily adapt himself to the new life, and for me it will be great joy and happiness to know that I have helped."

Madame Maranet paused and with a warm, friendly smile continued:

"Then there is yourself—young, pretty, and without a husband; and not so very much money, is that not true? Is he not a charge? Is it not possible that he may stand in the way of some project . . . some project . . . your life, possibly, to reconstruct?"

"I am all right as I am," Anna tried to say. But the keen observations of the American had come so close to her intimate deliberations that the young woman could not conceal a profound blush.

Yes, if Gribiche were away she could feel utterly free to marry Philip Gavary. The idea had presented itself imperiously to her ever since the proposition had been laid before her mind. Never would she have consented to part with the boy had not the separation been to his advantage. But here, she reflected again, he would be happy, with a brilliant and happy future before him. She hesitated, still wavering.

It was the American who broke the silence.

"What use is it to wait for a decision? I made mine without perplexity. You know you would be acting in selfishness were you to refuse this offer for the boy."

"Yes, it would be selfishness, great selfishness," thought Anna, yet clinging to the one idea that softened her scruples. The boy was hers, and she loved him.

"I should like to consult a few of my friends before I give you final answer," she said at last, thinking of Philip. But a protest arose on the lips of her interrogator.

"Oh, no, do not consult any one. Never consult any one but your own conscience. Have I consulted any one to come to my resolution? Your friends would tell you to say 'yes,' and you know it."

How well Anna knew what her friends would say. No longer did she waver. She would accept the offer, if Gribiche would accept it. Suddenly she felt fear that he might refuse.

"Call him, and let us know at once what he thinks of the matter," the American's voice called out eagerly. A swift light shone in her face and her eyes grew brighter.

Anna turned toward the door, made a step, then suddenly, her thought mirrored in her pale face, stopped at the threshold of the little chamber which enclosed her son. A sound like the plaintive bleat of a lamb, of a weary animal in pain, issued from her lips.

"Ah, Madame, you ask me to give up my boy, my own little one. It is impossible, impossible! He would be lonely were he not with me . . . and I, sick without him. We understand each other so well. We love each other so greatly. And never has he caused me trouble or grief."

A note of impatience, almost of anger, tempered the stranger's voice.

"You do not look to the future, to the day when he must work and can be no longer by your side. What of his life then, and yours? The world is a hard place in which to live. Who else will offer him such opportunity? Ask him yourself, Madame Belot. Call him now, into the room here."

An indistinguishable murmur, born of weary pondering and despair, was on the mother's lips as she passed into her boy's room. But Gribiche, it seemed, was very much occupied in finishing dressing and in brushing the fair hair that softened his open, boyish face.

"You do not know who is there?" Anna greeted him, nodding her head toward the dining room. "You have not heard anything?"

"No, Mother, I was sleeping, and now, you see, I am getting dressed."

The lie came smoothly without a blush. His face pressed close against the frail door that separated the two rooms, he had heard each word of the conversation that had passed between his mother and the American, and it was only when he heard his mother coming to seek him that he set hastily about the work in which he now seemed so industriously engaged.

"It is the lady of the *Trois Quartiers*, and she has come—to propose something to you. My pet, I do not want it . . . but, at any event, you must know. Come to see her."

Gribiche obediently followed his mother and listened gravely, his hands in his pockets, his face serious but reflecting no thought, as the American quickly explained in decisive words the proposition she had made. Then, wrapped in an absorbed air, he reflected.

The two women watched him, one eager, one anxious. Several seconds passed and then, in a low voice and his eyes turned away from the woman who had given him birth and livelihood, he said firmly:

"I should like to go."

The pallor that had tinged Anna's face for the last hour became a sudden red and then became a whiter hue than

before. "Gribiche, you wish to go? How is it you wish to go!" and stupefaction sagged her shoulders.

The American intervened.

"Talk the matter over together, you two. I will wait here."

In the little room to which Gribiche led his mother, the debate was at once precipitated by the boy:

"I say, Mother, this must be accepted."

"Accepted! . . . but, my pet . . . do you wish to leave me?"

He made a movement of the shoulders.

"It's wonderful, isn't it? Since it's offered, should we let it pass by? I could have refused, you understand, but do I not know quite well how you must work and wear out yourself in order to bring me up? I am always thinking of that. And I shall not be able to earn anything for a long time."

Anna's arms stole to the boy and passionately she pressed him to her.

"Oh, but my pet, you do not understand! I have only you for a child and we have been so happy together."

The woman's tears wet the boy's face and he seemed to choke back a sob as he repeated, this time with something almost akin to coarseness in his tone:

"We must not be stupid. Think of what she has offered! And I shall frequently see you."

Bitterly, sorrowfully, Anna responded:

"Then it is decided. You wish to accept. We will go and tell her. Certainly, we must not be stupid!"

Her lagging steps followed the boy's decisive ones into the dining room. "So he had chosen to do this, without hesitation, without any semblance of regret," she said inwardly. Who would have thought that her Gribiche would be so quick to leave her! How ungrateful children can be, even at the best!

The American woman was waiting complacently, as though she had known that the answer was to be to her satisfaction. A warm, glad look suffused her face as the boy swiftly told her the proposition was accepted.

"Oh, how this pleases me!" kissing Gribiche. "I shall call you Gribb, my dear boy. It will be an amusing name.

PART TWO

"At home, sometimes, there was *pâté de foie*, and I like it very much. And afterwards we would have fried potatoes."

Gribiche was regaling this new mother, seated, as he was, before a table in the lavishly furnished dining room of her magnificent home; but he had chosen to place in his tone, and a suggestion of it in his words, the fact that he was looking back to old days to which the present luxuries could not compare. Obviously, the food, delectable as it was, did not appeal greatly to his fancy, and the manner in which the dishes succeeded each other seemed to him equally deplorable.

He remarked about the ham: "I do not care for it after, and besides, there are no pickles."

But Madame Maranet, if she marked his tartness, did not seem to understand that "after" meant that Gribiche did not like ham served with salad at the end, instead of near the beginning, of a repast. And how much better it was served with vinegar pickles.

On the other hand, he observed, one should hardly have macaroni served on timbale; it appealed to him only when served with juicy cuts of well chosen veal, copiously smothered with gold-brown onions. He went back in memory to the veal that Anna Belot had prepared with such culinary skill; he regretted also the black sausages and "friands" that were for Sunday morning feasts, the *fromage de tête* and the sheep's tongue in jelly, the rabbit sauté and the burgundian beef, the preserved lobster, the mustard salad, and the satisfying white beans, unctuous with oil and vinegar.

Above all, he regretted the little supper parties that made joyous Saturday evenings in the restaurant of the rue Lecourbe.

That was really pleasure; that was really luxury; not this cold, stiff elegance that surrounded him now. He had dreamed his dreams, this shrewd-minded boy, when he left the humble lodgings in Grenelle to enter a new and more colorful life, but somehow his castles seemed somewhat wrecked and shattered, spoiled as though by time

and the elements, and he felt that here, after all, there were only constraint, privations and mortification.

"At home I dressed myself alone," he said to the chambermaid, with a suggestion of defiance in his manner. "And what is worse, taking a bath every day. What for? And always worrying about my finger-nails, and pushing the skin till it hurts."

Gribiche indulged in such discourse frequently now, in particular, to make more emphatic the remembrance of the affectionate care with which his mother had busied herself about him. The love and honest admiration that he had held for her were strengthened now by separation.

The new habits, the excessive and studied elegance that were thrust upon him, seemed to fire so many unformulated criticisms upon his former mode of living. Madame Maranet's manner he did not understand, though he studied her carefully with his precocious gift of observation. She wished to be good to him, certainly; and for that he forced himself to feel gratitude. But invariably her presence irritated him, more and more as he stayed beneath her roof. And she did many things that shocked him. Why, for instance, did she play the piano with a cigarette between her lips? Would his mother do that? No. Certainly not. And then, the things that she played . . . those doleful affairs. Gribiche unconsciously shuddered and declared to himself he could not bear to hear them.

"At home," he said one day, "Mamma sings the 'Violettes' of Raquel Meller, and sometimes M. Gavary brings his mandolin and Mamma and Louise sing."

The butler, too, caused daily transgressions on the boy's tempered feelings. Gribiche thought of him as something big, stiff, dumb and immovable, yet always watching and increasing his awkwardness. The napkin that they had declared should not be tied about his neck was another offender. Diabolically it would insist on slipping from his knees, adding to the complications of these baffling knives and forks.

Gribiche had innate dignity and respect for himself. It irked him exceedingly now to believe that he was, per-

haps, inferior; in good faith he sought to adapt himself to the situation, but, miserably analyzing things, he persuaded himself that it was he who was at fault.

Even worse than having his meals in the presence of Madame Maranet were the meals taken alone in his room, under the haughty surveillance of a servant who seemed to become, day by day, more contemptuous and insulting and who treated him, more by his manner and tone than by actual words, as a poor person, a paltry beggar. For the sake of pride, Gribiche held his tongue and determinedly resolved not to complain.

It was when Madame dined in town, or had guests, sumptuously dressed and chatting gaily, in the dining room of her own home, that the boy was told that his meal would be served in his room. Why did she not allow him at these repasts? Was she ashamed of him? The exclusion hurt, even while he congratulated himself. Sometimes, in the afternoon he was led to the drawing room where there were visitors, and he knew of nothing more embarrassing, more humiliating. Then Madame would call him "young Gribbs," or "my little savage"; and she would recount, with cutting enthusiasm, the act of probity that had been the wretched beginning of all this.

"Oh, splendid!" would exclaim the women. "Fine." the men. And then, as though he were an exhibit at some fair, they would stand about and closely examine him, remarking on his appearance and deigning, no doubt to please Madame, to cast compliments his way.

"The persons" were curiously elegant, Gribiche admitted, but one could not quite judge whether the affair was worth while or not. When Madame, seeking new amusement, asked, after one of these receptions, what his opinion was of the diversion and what he thought of such and such a woman, he replied, pausing for thought in order to speak tactfully:

"At home, sometimes, my mother (it was with solemn deference that he emphasized the title) wore (he did not say 'also') beautiful dresses to dinner and to the cinema, and she would put scent on her handkerchief."

Thus, resolutely, he indicated that his mother was the

one being in the world whom he admired and revered to the exclusion of all others. He experienced, now, a poignant grief in deliberately speaking of her always with a past tense, as though she were dead, and this feeling engendered in him a secret grudge against Madame Maranet, who, he thought bitterly, did not take him often enough to see his mother.

The American, in fact, desired to keep the child as far removed from his former circle as it was possible for her to do. Gribiche surmised as much, reflecting that his mother was free on Sundays and that then, surely, they could visit together. He could, at least, be taken there in the morning . . . it was hardly more than twenty minutes' ride by automobile, this automobile that inevitably was directed towards the Bois de Boulogne, such a delight in former days when one went by tram but now provoking him to an extreme.

And these superintended walks that he had, as hateful as the lessons given him by these eternally serious professors. The games to which he was led, like some slave to an arena, were as bad, if not worse. Everything, everything seemed repulsive and strange. Even the animals inspired him with inquietude, for he thought, with disconcerted tenderness, that one could not understand them.

"In my home before there were cats and dogs, but not like these. Sometimes Capri, Madame Leflat's dog, came barking at the door and we would let him in." At that, Madame Maranet lifted her carefully corrected eyebrows, and Gribiche once more fell silent. He felt alone, abandoned, distressed. His state of soul was that of an exile in an alien land. Not only did he fail to comprehend the worth of this luxury which surrounded him, but day by day, it seemed to him to be more deeply marked as deception and sham, and he sharply contrasted it with the luxury that his mother had judged as such.

"If she only had as much money as this . . . how well she would employ it!"

Each day the child missed more and more the presence, maternal and vigilant, tender and gay and expansive, of the workwoman. In his luxuriant, massive bedroom, he

felt fear all evening, with strange, childish fantasies crossing and recrossing his mind. The fear in the night would be even greater, when, awakening abruptly from some frightening dream, he would realize with despair that she, the one who could calm and help him, was not there. He was alone . . . alone.

Gribiche, in all honesty, tried to check the growing realization that there were times when he detested the usurper who, in her suave, deliberate way, had taken him away from his home. It was wrong, wrong; they had all been wrong to do such a thing, and he was the victim!

The error, if she suspected it at all, was not at first comprehended by the independent Madame Maranet. The remarks that he had first formulated, directed a trifle caustically to the meals, the supposed pleasures, and, in general, all the conditions of his new existence, were somewhat lost. He is merely observing and making comparisons, thought the woman. Soon he will adapt himself.

But, although she rarely thought of the boy unless he was before her eyes, she must have gradually begun to observe that he did not adapt himself so quickly after all, and she began to be somewhat shocked by the persistence of his remarks. She was, indeed, exceedingly surprised by the attitude he now adopted when, on the days of her receptions, she presented him to her friends and rehearsed again the story of how he had come into her life.

Gribiche, then, would listen, seeming neither intimidated nor petulant, properly speaking but distant, detached, quietly listening, closely observing. His face, uncannily stoic, gave no hint of his thoughts or emotions. Perhaps, she thought, he regards this as a joke. He ought to, occasionally at least, show some gratitude for what she had done for him. Was he not pleased, after all, or did he fail to understand the great kindness that had been extended to him?

This last thought, recurring more often than others, caught Madame Maranet with particular sharpness; she was shocked, also, by the reports of Pauline, her favorite chambermaid. Thin, correct, pinched and disdainful

Pauline entertained the same sour feeling toward Gribiche as did the other servants, who disdainfully regarded him as a plebeian, not one whit better than themselves, who had wormed his way into the graces of their mistress.

Pauline, therefore, gathering together and magnifying the kitchen tales, presented them, then, diplomatically to Madame. "M. Gribb did this . . . and M. Gribb said that . . ." and it was this story-telling that proved to what point Gribiche fondly rued the loss of his former environment and detested his surroundings of today.

"The boy is less intelligent than I thought," said Madame Maranet to herself. Was she, then, completely deceived? Had she not reflected sufficiently before taking this child? She would not acknowledge this because of her firm belief that she could make no mistake. To be deceived, to have acted too quickly and foolishly would have been so humiliating. Besides, she had a lively sense of the duties contracted when she took possession of the child.

But Gribiche was no longer an object of interest; he no longer amused her. There was no warmth of affection in her heart when she regarded him and she resented keenly that he kept aloof, distant, and unconfiding. Even so, she did not wish to fail in a work she had so impulsively and proudly undertaken and on which she had been so lavishly complimented by her friends.

Patience and perseverance were required. The boy would certainly understand eventually the value of what had been given him and the opportunities still held out to him.

Gribiche's mother had remarried; it was with inward satisfaction that Madame Maranet learned this, for was it not the confirmation of the perspicacity she had shown when declaring to Anna Belot that the presence of the boy was an obstacle in her life. This marriage, then, was something to make stronger the separation between Gribiche and his mother.

Madame Maranet gained new confidence in the work she had undertaken. Gribiche, too, had ceased his critical observations of surroundings and Pauline's caustic reports

were less frequent. The boy seemed, too, to be gradually absorbing some of the manners and customs so patiently taught him. Perhaps, at last, he was beginning to understand and appreciate the situation.

"Gribb adapts himself," thought Madame Maranet.

But time has a strange habit of unraveling new events in the puzzling skein of existence.

PART THREE

It was toward the middle of June that Gribiche began to revolt definitely against the existence in the house on the rue Erlanger. He had, in fact, understood the situation, but in a manner entirely different from that which Madame Maranet optimistically believed. He had understood that everything about him was odious, detestable, and strange, and always would be. He had ceased his critical observations because the comparisons, he knew, were useless. A stranger in a strange world, he decided to build a world of his own, shutting himself within, contenting himself as best he could, and patiently waiting. . . .

Awaiting what? He did not know. He only knew that in his heart there was something yearning and looking forward and up, as though to a brighter, finer horizon of life. He wondered why he was not taken more frequently to see his mother. He knew of her marriage to Philip Gavary; did she not wish, then, to see him? The letter that had brought the news was stilted, even cold. Bitterest of all pangs was the thought that she, his own mother, did not any longer love him.

As for Anna, though Gribiche did not know it, she felt her son's absence keenly. She was distressed that she did not see him more often. On the other hand, she still resented the readiness and lack of hesitation which Gribiche had shown when the question of leaving her arose.

It was a secret wound, which she nourished, and even her new husband did not share in this one confidence. Her little Gribiche, her little companion of a tender decade, for whom she had worked so hard, never protesting the fact that he was a burden, as well as a responsibility! Yes, children were ungrateful. . . .

The rare Sundays when the two were together for brief intervals, a sorry constraint made a breach between them. It was a brooding misunderstanding that made them awkward and undemonstrative. There was strange lack of emotion and tenderness in the long hour. But when they parted, after having kissed each other dutifully, Anna cried in her kitchen and Gribiche tried not to cry in the great automobile that whisked him back, all too quickly, to the house on the rue Erlanger, to the suave Madame Maranet, to the supercilious and jealous servants, to the hostile and unending luxury which he hated now with a fierce vehemence.

Pauline, ever on the watch like a snake waiting to stun a bird, was, as might have been expected, the first to make known to her mistress that Gribiche's last hour of morose resignation had ended, and with astounding demonstration. Her face twisted with victorious abhorrence as she began excitedly to recount to Madame, lounging at the end of a long afternoon in her corridor, what had happened.

"It can hardly be believed, Madame, but I myself was there. Since today is Thursday I accompanied M. Gribb to the woods, in the automobile as you have directed. When we reached the lake I suggested to M. Gribb that he play and walk a bit, the while I sat upon a chair and conversed with a very pretty English woman who had a baby there in a perambulator.

"Only a few minutes had passed, Madame, but I saw that M. Gribb had entirely disappeared. At once I got up to hunt for him, and went frantically all about the place, as anxious as Madame could imagine, and all at once I heard the voice of a young vagabond shouting:

"'Your turn now, my old Gribiche.'

"I approached, Madame, and what did I see? In a clearing, Madame (and her voice became higher with each succeeding word), there were four or five dirty young rascals playing pitch and toss with sous, and in their midst was M. Gribb playing with them!

"All together, I was as shocked and upset as Madame can believe, and when I called to him to come back, those dirty young vagabonds mocked me with all sorts of horrors.

And when, afterwards, I warned M. Gribb that I must report the matter to you, Madame, he said what I dare not say, Madame."

An imperious toss of her head denoted Madame Maranet's intentions even before she spoke. "Tell the boy to come at once to me," she said curtly.

Gribiche was soon in her presence, seeming neither afraid nor ashamed but somber and determined. It was only when the woman's tirade swerved to "unknown vagabonds" that he chose to speak.

"They were not vagabonds," he began, without presenting excuse for his own actions. "There was Poisson, the son of the fruiterer, near our home at Grenelle, and Berju, the son of the publican, and a third lad, with whom I went to school last year and whom I liked very well. And sometimes these same boys came to our home on Sunday and I played with them then . . . but now . . . now I have no one."

Then he clenched his teeth, kept silent a moment, and added aggressively:

"The sous we played with were mine."

Madame Maranet failed to understand this boldly flung challenge. Never did she give money to Gribiche, but his mother had done so and he wished to make clear that it was with this treasure that he had played. He greeted new remonstrances with dignified silence and then went away. To Madame the event was not dramatic and deliberately she returned to her book. The boy, she decided, had had a big throwback to his vulgar tastes.

However, a second event, which took place shortly after, had, to the American, an aspect more serious and brought her considerable mortification.

Among the servants was one who bore kindly sympathy toward the forlorn lad who lived, wretched as a prisoner, in the great house. This was the chauffeur, marked type of the Parisian gamin, clinging fondly to independence and laughing at life from beneath the security of his correct uniform and professional impassibility.

Gribiche called up memories of a nonchalant boyhood, not without happiness, while Gribiche, in turn, held lively

interest for mechanics in general and automobiles in particular. He, therefore, sought the garage as often as his sagacious mind thought prudent.

The Thursday that followed the game of pitch and toss saw Gribiche with a slight cold and the weather disagreeable. Alone in his bedroom at three o'clock, restless but idly watching the torrential rain outside, the boy was caught suddenly by desire as his attention was turned to the chauffeur, leaving the garage after carelessly shutting the door.

The temptation was too strong to resist . . . he would, besides, be doing no harm; and the decision was made. Hastening to a secluded cupboard where, as though treasured as symbols of bygone happiness, were the clothes he had worn in the old days before luxury became for him a prison, Gribiche drew forth the jacket and trousers and stripped himself of the elegant suit, casting it aside in glee as his spirits warmed with contemplation of a new adventure.

Happy, joyous as though he had suddenly found the old days after weary longing for their return, he went from his room, furtively hastened from the house and, the thrill of boyhood running fast through his blood, slipped into the garage.

Fortune is contrary. It was not often now, unless they were repugnant, that Madame Maranet's thoughts were of Gribiche, but on this day and at this particular hour she wanted him in her presence. Unexpectedly, her cousin had just arrived from New York.

Percy A. Brown, thin, bald-headed, solemn, cold and methodical, was engrossed with trenchant enthusiasm for sociology, statistics and philanthropy. To him Madame Maranet owed many of the sundry notions which she entertained for fortunes and their philanthropic use. She greatly admired this cousin of hers and for a long time had been hoping to prove that, if the opportunity offered, she could ardently and successfully apply his theories. Gribb, adopted in such romantic fashion, was abiding proof.

To her guest, enthusiastically, she related, therefore, the circumstances which had led to the adoption, skilfully

evading details that might detract from the charm of the story. Then to Pauline she gave the order for the boy's appearance and, animated by an uncharitable expectation, that personage set off to do the bidding of her mistress.

A glance within the empty room, and the maid went in haste through wide rooms and long corridors, and finally to the out-of-doors where, before the garage, she called loudly: "Master Gribb! Master Gribb!"

Gribiche came forth from his play and Pauline, her charity in no way increased by the hasty hunt she had just ended, grasped him by the arm, malicious enjoyment concealed beneath a cloak of cold indignation as she noted his garb and divined at what occupation he had been engaging himself. Directly to the drawing room she imperiously led him, dirty, dusty, uncombed, blotched with black from head to foot, and looking, in his old clothes, like a little vagabond of the streets.

Mr. Percy A. Brown's surprise and disgust were obvious. On Madame Maranet's countenance was a look of consternation and horror.

Her voice broke in shocked dismay: "What is that? What is that? Gribb, Gribb!"

No answer came from the boy. Since the first incident when the relentless Pauline had caught him at the game of pitch and toss, his attitude had been one of unashamed impenitence. Now his face was serene, even under the splotches of black grease, and there seemed to be no remorse for what he had been doing.

"Go away, go away, at once!" commanded Madame Maranet, waving her hand.

Only a shade of red on his face denoted that Gribiche, sensitive in his boyishness, was stung, but, dignified and erect, he obeyed this new command. A feeling of contentment went with him: he had, at last, affirmed his independence; he had, at last, proved that he still had personality.

He heard Madame's voice as he went from the room, changed now, in its tone, from haughty imperiousness to humble apology. "I am astonished and annoyed beyond words," she was saying.

The bleak, cold, methodical voice of Percy Brown came forth.

"My dear," he said, "it is only an error of generosity. Do not be astonished; the event is so logical. Charity must not be given to individuals: it is necessary to restrain action to collectivity. My dear, do not believe that an individual, the recipient of such extraordinary charity as I am sure you have shown this boy, will ever give you reward, trust, or affection. You have only been misled."

Madame Maranet was convinced now that she had been, in effect, grossly deceived, and that truth was speaking to her through the voice of Percy A. Brown. But, wounded as she was in her self-respect and vain pride, she did not wish, even yet, to admit that she had failed.

"The boy is intelligent and will adapt himself," she said and smiled with forced animation.

And when, on the morrow, she found herself once more with Gribiche, she carefully avoided conversation. "The silence," thought Gribiche, "is not an indulgence. Certainly she is cross with me at present, and it worries her to have me here. I have only to go away."

PART FOUR

"My dear boy, what an austere air you have today! What is troubling you?"

Madame Maranet's tone was sympathetic and she deigned to smile almost cordially as she put the question before him and awaited his reply. The boy's somber air, as he sat quietly down to dinner, caught her attention.

He hesitated a moment with his answer and then said briefly:

"There is nothing wrong, Madame."

With unaccustomed solicitude she persisted:

"Oh, yes, Gribb, something is wrong. One would think you had been overtaken by some catastrophe."

"It is the holiday today, Madame," said Gribiche, seeking to change the subject. But when she repeated, as though in surprise, "the holiday?" he failed to conceal some of the indignation he felt. Was Madame just pre-

tending she did not understand or didn't she have any sentiment at all?

"It is the Fourteenth of July, I mean," his tone half a rebuke.

"Ah, yes, Gribb, the national holiday. Well, what of that?"

The boy frankly showed his astonishment now. Didn't she even understand now that the national holiday meant, not being shut up and being obliged to go through the sickening routine of every day, but celebrating as one should celebrate such a day as this? This day, when the streets were alive with gay people and flags and music and color! But he smothered the hot words that were rising to his lips and said, wistfully hopeful:

"Well, this is the day when one has a lark."

"Gribb," and the suave voice once more bore the old note of authority, "do not use that word."

"Well, at any rate, one amuses one's self."

"And what did you do before to amuse yourself on this day?" It pleased Madame to condescend to such intimacy and she smiled benignly.

"Everything! We did everything!" and the boy's eyes gleamed as swift memories brought him a taste of happiness. "There were the bands, and the lights and parades, and then, so wonderful, the fireworks in the evening. They were beautiful, Madame; so beautiful; like rain of gold, and stars, the shooting fire. And then there was the dancing, and Mamma and I would go, and while she danced I would wait for her on the terrace of the public house. What a time we had!"

Madame Maranet was observing Gribiche closely. Never had she seen him like this, with the light of excitement in his face, his eyes shining, his face joyous. The boy was intoxicated with the remembrance of old pleasures. No longer was he the aloof, distant, undemonstrative child that she had known. Here was the real Gribiche, living in his own circle.

The American woman understood now, for the first time, what he had been suffering. But even yet her pity was mingled with displeasure that he should find joy in such

common diversions. He had learned nothing after all, and all she had done to give him culture was spent vainly; he did not adapt himself. He never would adapt himself.

Gribiche, struck by her intense look, believed that he had at last made her understand what he wished her to understand. Surely she was tempted by the delights he had spread before her. And it was only nine o'clock; there was still time to go out to the streets and the crowds, and enjoy the splendors of the evening. He continued with new fervor:

"From St. Cloud, up the hill, the fireworks can be seen easily. And it will be a nice ride in the auto and not very far." His voice rose in eager expectancy.

Madame Maranet waited a moment and said at last:

"Well, Gribb, since you are so fond of fireworks, I think you could see something of them from one of the windows on the second floor, but I do not think you should go abroad tonight when there are so many people everywhere. As for myself, I am going to shut myself up in order not to hear those detestable bands. They annoyed me excessively last evening. Really, I ought to leave Paris earlier, as I have done in other years.

"Ah, on the subject of traveling," she continued. "I must tell you, Gribb, that next week we shall leave for Trouville, where I have a villa. Do you like the sea, Gribb? Would you like to see it?"

The boy's acute perception sensed that she was striving to be agreeable and he made a supreme effort at politeness, giving an affirmative answer. Then, leaving the table, he bade her good night and went, with aching heart and a sob in his throat, to his room.

The pain which he felt, as he reflected that all his hope, built on his eager narrative of past national holidays, had ended in this bitter, tormenting disappointment, was deepened by bitterness and anger. There was nothing to do now . . . nothing to hope . . . and soon the evening would be gone.

A sudden resolution made his hands clench and his lips tighten as he recalled Madame Maranet's declaration that they were to leave soon for Trouville. So they were going to

take him away from Paris now, were they? Away from his mother, away from everything dear? His teeth clicked together; vehemently he brushed away the tears that had insisted on coming to his eyes. Well, he would show them . . . he had had quite enough.

Half an hour later a window on the ground floor of a darkened house on the rue Erlanger was opened noiselessly, and a slim form climbed cautiously through and found footing on the cool grass that stretched like a carpet beneath. A shadow traversed the court, silently unbolted a door, passed through and closed it with precision.

It was Gribiche. Once again he was dressed in his old coat, his old trousers, his old boots. At his best speed he made for the Grenelle bridge, determined to see the fireworks.

The spectacle thrilled his boyish heart as he had anticipated. Mixed with his delight was exultant pride at the thought of his escape. The knowledge that now he was at liberty, no longer imprisoned by hateful elegance and specters of respectability, gave him almost delirious joy.

He was not sure about what he was to do later, but now, he knew, he wanted to be with the crowd; a part of the splendid, colorful, vibrant celebration in the streets. He listened rapturously to the orchestras. He regaled himself with an ice at a little barrow, and with a glass of beer on the terrace of a public house; he stopped at an open-air amusement center to revel in watching the dancers.

"Well, well! It's the kid!" a familiar voice cried out all at once, startling him with its proximity.

Gribiche turned his head and beheld at his side Pauline, the maid, and Marcelin, the butler. The maid's voice rose caustically as she demanded: "M. Gribb, what are you doing here?"

Gribiche leaped as the butler stretched forth a pudgy hand to seize him. "Leave me alone, you toadies," he jerked out angrily as he shot beneath the man's extended arm and took to flight, bitter that his pleasure should have been thus marred.

The butler took a few steps forward in feigned pursuit but considered that it was hardly dignified to rush across

crowded streets after an agile and good-for-nothing youngster. Besides, curious eyes of onlookers were adding to his embarrassment. He took the maid's arm and walked abruptly away.

"He has run away, that is sure," said the agitated Pauline.

"Yes, and we had better go at once and give warning. There might be trouble if it ever became known that we met him and then said nothing. What a dirty little brute he is, all the same, to oblige us to leave the dance."

"And what about me? I did not say that I was going out. But no use now to think about that. We must give warning at once."

"A nuisance. We were having an excellent time. You danced like an angel, Pauline."

They hastened back to the rue Erlanger, and went at once to the drawing room where Madame Maranet was still reading. Pauline, evidently, was under violent emotion; the butler was even more formal than usual.

"Madame does not know what has happened?" Pauline began. "It is astounding, and you must know of it at once. Marcelin, here, had been as far as Passy to get a little fresh air, and whom did he see but M. Gribb, Madame, and looking like a vagabond as he walked alone on the street. But the worst is, Madame, that when Marcelin went to speak to him M. Gribb shouted out, 'you dirty toady!' and rushed madly down the street at a fearful gallop. It was useless to try to follow. I have always said the boy has bad instincts."

"It cannot be possible," the astonished Madame Maranet exclaimed. "Perhaps he has returned to his room. Let us go and see."

But Gribiche's room held no Gribiche, and gleaming white on the dressing table and held securely by the ruler which he had so often used, in diligent note work, was a sheet of paper torn from his copy-book.

Madame's hands stole to her forehead in puzzled contemplation and her shoulders seemed to sag as she read: "I have gone for good. Do not look for me."

Then cold reflection commanded her and she stooped to the waste basket to draw from it crumpled sheets ner-

vously thrust there by a small boy's hand. "He has made no progress in writing; it is just as bad as his manners." And she took time to study scraps of phrases written by Gribiche in his fantastic style:

I am perhaps going to go . . .

I pleased myself . . .

I could not endure . . .

Her eyebrows contracted as she let the scraps fall back into the basket.

"He has taken nothing away but his old things," said the scrutinizing Pauline. "That is one good thing. For myself, I think he fled by the garage door. It is fortunate he did not steal anything."

"You are a fool," remarked her mistress dryly, as though she resented the maid's remarks.

The woman was cut, mortified, embarrassed. What would her friends say? So this was the way he chose to pay her for the kindness she had showered upon him. Gratitude! Bah! Gratitude! Her cousin was right. Individual charity is harmful and vain.

She would have let the tears come but reflected that this was, after all, only a ridiculous experience and one that should give her a lesson. At any event, her error was repaired and she no longer owed anything to the child. In running away so insolently, in showing himself so utterly lacking in gratitude, he had freed her from every obligation.

"You, Pauline, will collect all the clothing of this young Belot and take it to his mother. You will kindly tell her that I will invest for her son the exact sum of money which my bag contained the day he brought it to me, so that he may have it to his advantage when he becomes of age. As to the boy, I never wish to see him again nor do I wish to hear his name mentioned. Remember that, Pauline, and make the woman understand."

PART FIVE

Gribiche, free from the clutch of the butler and the insulting Pauline, ran for a long time. Avoiding the open

spaces and the crowds, he fled, a lonely figure, along dark and deserted streets. He heard a clock strike midnight as he crossed the Seine by the Iena bridge and, breathless and weary, sought the Champ de Mars and dropped into a seat.

The excitement which had fevered him at the beginning of his flight was dissipated now and he sought to reflect carefully what he should do. Where was he to find shelter and how was he to live? He choked with emotion and yearning desire as the thought of his mother rose to taunt him, and he thought of the humble happiness of former days. Could he return to Grenelle, with everything changed and his mother remarried? Did she love him, perhaps just a little bit? What would she say when he told her that he had run away from Auteuil? What would Philip Gavary, her husband, say?

An uncertain step drawing nearer distracted the boy from his chain of thoughts. A detective dressed like a workman in holiday clothes emerged from the shadows, zigzagged across the grass, and sank heavily on the seat beside Gribiche, who cautiously edged farther away. The man addressed an unintelligible mutter of words to this other stranger in the night (obviously he had been celebrating too hilariously) and then, stretching himself lengthwise on the bench, fell into a noisy sleep.

Gribiche, amused, soared again in spirit. A new strength came into his veins and he had a sweet conviction that everything in the end would be all right. The happiness of being free from the tyranny of riches that for weeks had held him prisoner dominated him anew, and, whistling, he proceeded with alert steps down the lonely road.

He stopped to watch dancers gaily whiling away the night in front of the military school and indulged again in a glass of beer. He realized as he started away, after lingering for nearly an hour, that he was physically very weary. Where was he now to go?

In the gray light of the breaking day he directed his worn feet toward Grenelle, carefully avoiding the police spied from a distance. He was not in the mood for ques-

tions, and to have Gavary finding him at the police station would be the culmination of all misfortunes.

His heart was heavy but his feelings fraught with emotion as he neared the house where once he had known happiness. He did not know that Anna Gavary had a secret reason for keeping the little house, even after marriage to the factory overseer, and that the sweetest treasure in her opinion was the room he had blessed with his daily play in the untroubled hours of childhood.

The boy was crying now, crying with fatigue and yearning. His eyes went up to the windows of the third-floor lodging, where love, he hoped, was awaiting him, but to which he dared not go.

"It is Gribiche! It is Gribiche!" and from behind him rang the voice he was longing to hear. In an instant he was in her arms, pressing her face to his, wetting it with his tears. She half crooned as, pressing him yet more tightly in an embrace of concentrated love and satisfied hunger, she murmured:

"O Gribiche, my little boy, what are you doing here?"

All the aching agony of days, suppressed in his boyish pride and resolution, was spending itself now in the assuaging comfort of tears. He cried, hardly knowing why he cried, and she cried with him.

It was the voice of Gavary that changed thought and action. Watching them with mixed emotion, tender understanding predominant, he said at last:

"Come along now. Let's go up."

Gribiche, in broken, breathless phrases, told his story. No small detail escaped his remembrance; he half shuddered as he lived over again the wretched days of his existence in the house on the rue Erlanger. He went back to the servants, the animals, the food; to all the hateful luxury, the receptions which galled him so bitterly, the lessons that irked him beyond endurance. He told of the game of pitch and toss, the trouble that started with the temptation of the garage, the forbidden celebration of the Fourteenth of July.

"Then you have run away," interjected Gavary. "But I must say you have done well to serve that woman out. With

tricks like that they would soon make a Bolshevik of you. And that is what they call philanthropy! Poof!" And Gavary looked his scorn.

Anna, sitting down, took Gribiche upon her lap. They had been separated so long that now it seemed she could not get enough of him, and tenderly she smoothed his ruffled, dust-clotted hair and kissed him over and over.

"We were mad to let you go, my pet. Philip could not understand it. A dozen times he had said to me, 'We must get the boy back. You are his mother,' but how could I know that you wanted to come?"

She hesitated before going on, then said:

"Won't you tell me, Pet, why you decided so quickly to go with this woman whom neither of us knew?"

Gribiche did not answer, and Anna said more insistently:

"Come now, tell me the truth. You say that you are happy here, and you have run away in order to be back. Why, then, did you wish to go in the first place?"

Gribiche bowed his head, the red mantling the cheeks that were white and wet with tears a little while before. They could hardly hear him speak:

"I thought I was in your way . . . and I couldn't bear that. One evening we were at the restaurant with Louisette and Mlle. Merlet and the Vendrots and when we were coming home, and I was walking alone, I heard you tell Monsieur Gavary that you would not marry him because of me; because I would be unhappy, you said, and he, too. Then she came, as though everything was supposed to happen just like that, and I was glad of the chance to go."

Choked by a sob, the mother embraced the boy passionately. A momentary silence, and the boy spoke again, this time even more timidly: "Then I am not in your way?"

"Why should you be in the way, kiddie?" and on Gavary's face was a glow almost paternal. "Don't you know that we've been wanting you badly? And now we have you, and you're going to stay."

A warm look of gratitude from Anna was reflected by happiness on Gavary's face. Now that he lived with her, had her as his wife, saw her in their own little home, he was no longer tormented by jealousy. To be jealous of her

own son would be foolish, anyway. He could afford to be sympathetic and kind to the boy now.

He rubbed his hands together and his eyes twinkled gleefully.

"And Saturday, Gribiche, old scout, we're going to celebrate your homecoming with a big and glorious dinner at the restaurant!"

Saturday night, preceded by blissful hours of anticipation, came in due time. No one was late for the dinner; for all present, Gribiche especially, it was a memorable occasion. From the moment of his entry into the gaily bedecked dining room, young lion of the hour that he was, kisses, compliments, affectionate demonstrations, were lavishly showered upon him.

"Then you could not get used to it?" demanded Vendrot. "The fine old world did not suit you, after all!" and a chuckle sounded in his throat.

Louisette declared pointedly that the lady certainly was not very nice.

"Do tell us a little of how it was," begged Mlle. Merlet, always fascinated by stories of society and high life.

Gribiche answered politely, but briefly, as though discussion of other subjects would be much more to his liking.

"But you are happy here, my boy," and Gavary's tone denoted his happy pride.

"Oh, yes, indeed, Monsieur Gavary," and Gribiche's bright little face took on added glow.

"Monsieur Gavary! Monsieur Gavary! This will never do! Why do you call me that?" The foreman was plainly sorry, but a second later he grimaced with pleasure:

"Oh, yes, indeed, my old Philip," Gribiche had mischievously repeated.

Anna was ecstatic. In all her fondest dreams she had never dared to hope for this. The two whom she loved best in all the world were happy together!

The dinner now commanded attention. Napkins were unfolded, the menu pressed into service.

"But, Gribiche, little dear, you do not mean to say you have learned to dine without your napkin?" gaily de-

manded Mlle. Merlet, fixing her own napkin in her corsage.

The boy turned suddenly red in confusion. He had hoped they would not observe him too closely. An old specter haunted him: he saw again the austere sparkle of a dinner table he had known too well. The servants passed in review before him; the butler's stare mocked him in the face; the maid who had been a Nemesis in his progress was leering at him again.

Then, with a little sigh, he shut out the parade of bitter visions and smiled happily as though he had awakened from a nightmare and found life good to live.

Beneath his chin went his napkin.

RESURRECTION

By HENRI CHAUMET

JULIETTE LANCET, the daughter of a big banker, was once a prominent member of society in the town in which she lived.

She and her mother used to go out a great deal and they belonged to every worthwhile charity organization in the district. She was really very happy.

All of a sudden, one day, her father ran away. With him he took most of his bank's funds, leaving his wife and daughter with just enough money to keep starvation from their door.

The affair caused a tremendous scandal and, with the unfairness which is usual on the part of human beings in such circumstances, all the financier's friends who had deposited their money in his bank turned against his wife and daughter who remained behind.

Both women for a moment thought of leaving the town, but they owned a small house there which naturally relieved them from paying rent anywhere else; one might have believed, furthermore, that they would have followed the fugitive, but they remained for lack of money and on account of pride.

From then on they saw no one. They were snubbed in the streets by all those who knew them. Several of the stores where they used to make purchases refused to serve them any more and they were compelled to buy what they required at other stores, where business was bad.

They were insulted, humiliated and hated as one can be in a small, mean and envious little town. And when even ragged urchins laughed at them on the streets and called at them out loud, "Thieves, thieves," both women bowed their heads without defending themselves and went their way.

Ten years went by. Juliette's mother died. The young

girl got tired of living alone and finally, when she reached the age of thirty, she married Pierre Lancet, a well-to-do bookkeeper who worked at a factory in the suburbs.

She was superior to her husband from every point of view; yet, even if, for that reason, she failed to admire and love him, she was very grateful and affectionate to him.

She led a quiet life, taking walking trips into the country on Sundays and playing cards with friends of Pierre and their wives every evening. But she did not enjoy the latter's company because their way of feeling and thinking was not the same as her own.

At times, indeed, the serious look on her face worried her husband. But then, as he idolized her, he would just realize that their education had not been the same and that, no matter what he did, he would never entirely understand her character.

However, her apparently calm heart suffered with deep humiliation and self-contained rancor. Juliette hoped for a brilliant revenge, or that slowly her father's disgrace would be forgotten.

The only remaining vestige of her former social prominence was an insertion of her name in the "who's who," indicating what day of the week she remained at home to receive visitors.

But nobody ever went to see her.

One Tuesday at about four o'clock, however, she heard a carriage stop before the door of her house. Immediately she became excited, called Rose, the servant, and scolded her for not having combed her hair properly. The bell rang.

She was very pale and nervous when she took a seat in her parlor to await her visitor, trying to recall the names of her former friends and wondering who would be her caller. The latter was shown into the room. She was a tall woman, dressed in violet, whom Juliette did not know.

At first, Juliette was so nervous that she could hardly carry on the conversation but, later, her nerves relaxed and she talked brilliantly, in a way she had not been able to do with the wives of her husband's office friends.

Her cheeks were pink with pleasure, her eyes sparkled,

she whom trouble had discolored became nearly pretty. She was amusing, bright and witty. As a result, the caller remained a long time.

Only one thing troubled Juliette. She would have liked to know who this mysterious person was. As the latter spoke, she studied her carefully.

"Who is she? Where ever have I seen that face?"

In an effort to find this out she asked: "Do you like Pont-sur-Mers, Madame?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the unknown woman. "Very much. I have been here for only three weeks, yet I already feel better. I came from Paris and the country air of your little town is doing me good. Besides, the Vice-Governor's mansion is beautifully located."

So she was Madame Dugormay, the wife of the new Vice-Governor. Juliette was filled with gladness. She no longer heard what her visitor said to her and was nearly stunned by her joy.

Her name had been included on the list of calls which the new Vice-Governor's wife was to make. At first she experienced a feeling of pride, but then a purer feeling, that of hope for the future, took its place. Every door which had thus far been closed to her in her misfortune would be thrown open to receive her. For in this little town where many families imitated the closest details of the Mansion House customs, Mme. Dugormay's example would certainly be followed. That visit was the absolution of her father's crime.

Juliette became still more gracious, deliberately shining to seduce Mme. Dugormay and also to thank her, for that was her way of expressing her gratitude.

Finally the caller rose to go. Juliette took her to the door herself.

Just as the Vice-Governor's wife reached the doorstep she said, "Good-bye" with great simplicity, and Juliette stuttered:

"Thank you, Madame."

She felt like crying out: "You are kind," at the same time kissing her hand as poor beggars do.

When Pierre returned home at seven o'clock that eve-

ning, Juliette rushed towards him joyfully. She was tired of having uselessly screamed her delight at every object in the house, just as though they could have understood her.

She treated him as affectionately as though she had been in love with him. She kissed him teasingly upon his forehead and on the edges of his moustache, wherever she chanced to. She laughed all the time and because he asked her: "What on earth has happened to make you so happy?" she replied: "Guess! Guess!"

Then, as she considered that he was not trying hard enough to find out, she scolded him gently and in a childish way which gave a funny little twist to her lips.

She could not wait any longer and solemnly announced: "The Vice-Governor's wife came to see me."

He calmly replied: "Ah! Ah!"

And, because he remained practically indifferent, she suddenly felt like crying.

She asked: "But does it not please you?"

"Yes. Yes. I feel very much honored, indeed."

"Very much honored," that is all he could manage to say! At dinner she ate little and spoke much. From time to time Pierre advised her in a harsh tone of voice: "You would do better to eat. That call you received will not feed you."

But she would not listen to him. She grew nervous while she spoke. She salted the same dishes twice, upset the pepper all over the butter and began to giggle like a nervous child.

Pierre nearly lost his temper with her: "For heaven's sake what is the matter with you tonight?"

Without replying, Juliette explained: "Don't you see? Now that Mme. Dugormay has been to see me, I must, out of sheer courtesy, return her call, and afterwards we shall continue to meet each other."

Then, after reflecting deeply, she would continue: "Incidentally, without false modesty, I believe that I made a rather good impression upon that lady. Think of it, she remained with me for over half an hour."

Then she repeated, in ecstasy: "Over half an hour."

Jokingly Pierre exclaimed: "Over half an hour! She sure must have had nothing else to do."

Somewhat mortified, Juliette replied dryly: "Thank you," and continued, clapping her hands: "They will all receive me now. It was necessary that somebody should give the signal of forgiveness. It had to be a stranger, for the ladies of this town could hardly have done so themselves."

Pierre ate his meal dreamily, slowly. After dinner, as they rose from the table, she approached her husband but he stepped slightly backwards. So she asked: "What is the matter with you? You look sad."

He shook his head. "Nothing, I assure you."

"Come now. You are not telling the truth."

"Yes."

"I can see by your eyes that you are unhappy."

He replied with simplicity: "I thought that, up to the present time, you were happy with me."

For a few days, Juliette felt the pangs of remorse but, fortunately, her joy quickly got the better of her.

She no longer dared to speak of her happiness to Pierre. So that he should not suffer, when by chance she forgot herself and expressed her delight before him, she quickly tried to repress it, to hide it, and, in spite of everything, this separated them to a certain extent.

One day her husband casually said to her: "Maybe that Madame Dugormay of yours knew nothing about the scandal when she came and called upon you."

At first Juliette pretended not to understand. That same thought had sometimes tortured her but she quickly forgot all about it so as not to have to face it.

Thus, now that today Pierre brutally brought the subject up, she furiously objected to the absurdity of such an idea, asserting that Madame Dugormay had been told about the affair by her father's former secretary, and even going as far as to say that the Vice-Governor's wife had insinuated as much during her call.

She experienced no feeling of regret for telling this lie. She looked at Pierre with hatred, as though he were an open enemy who prevented the expansion of her hope. And because, nevertheless, she realized how unkind her move had

been, and to convince herself, she overcame him by muttering:

"You . . . You . . . You tell me that. You. You tell . . . You are cruel enough to remind me of . . . to . . . to blame me for my misfortune."

He did not know how to argue. He would have liked to prove to her that he had misunderstood. But he could not find the necessary words.

So, because his wife was sobbing, he felt like throwing himself at her feet and begging her pardon, but then he hesitated and his pride got the best of him. He did nothing to calm her down.

For that reason, she decided that "that man" was heartless.

One evening, Juliette was dreaming of their future social position. But one thing worried her. From childhood, her education and her tastes had fitted her for society life and for her it would be resurrection. But Pierre, who had always lived the life of an employee?

She suffered, for she was grateful to him and she was afraid that later he would make her blush.

For several days her heart was torn by contradictory feelings. At times she really despaired and decided to abandon her ambition and remain in the abyss of past years. Then, suddenly, hope returned, and she would reason with herself: soon Pierre would become assistant manager of the factory where he worked. His new position would be nearly a brilliant one.

But he, would he change?

Already she gave him advice as to how to dress properly; every morning she herself picked the tie he was to put on. And she would think: "He has not had much of an education, yet he has a lot of common sense."

Evenings, after dinner, she would say to him in an off-hand way: "Say. Here is a book I have re-read. It interested me very much. You, too, ought to read it," and she would hand him a book of classics which she used to read in her schooldays.

But he, pushing it aside, would answer: "No, thank you, I prefer my paper."

When the anxiously awaited day came for her to return Madame Dugormay's call, they had another argument.

On that day, of course, having spent all her time dressing, she did not have lunch. Pierre ate unwillingly.

Her hair was waved and her face was powdered. When coffee was served after luncheon, she was seated beside her husband and talking gaily. He did not say a word throughout the entire meal.

Suddenly, without warning, he seized her wrists.

Frightened by this attack, Juliette tried to escape from his grip, but he calmed her fears in a hoarse voice: "You have nothing to fear, I shall not hurt you."

Then slowly and calmly, he spoke: "Listen, Juliette. You are not to go to Madame Dugormay's."

She rose from her chair, but he continued to hold her. She laughed nervously, showing her teeth as though she were going to bite. Then furious: "Is that an order?"

He answered sadly: "Yes. Since you oblige me to do so."

"Ah! Really. And why?"

"Because . . . because I am unhappy. So far I have not said much about it. But now, I can no longer keep it to myself. If you go to that house I shall lose you, I feel it. And I want to keep you because you are all I have got and I love you."

His voice trembled. His eyes were sad and his grip was bruising Juliette's wrists.

He continued: "Once you have returned to your former life, among all those people whom I hate, I who am so humble will no longer count. So you are my prey and with all my power I want to defend you against those who will take you from my great love which, I know, is such an awkward one."

She felt all his strength gathered as though he were going to fight his enemies, brutally, with his fists. This frightened her and again she unsuccessfully attempted to escape his grip.

She became sweeter, explaining: "Come now, Pierrot, do not exaggerate. How could I ever possibly forget everything you have done for me? I love you, you know that. You are so kind."

She was frightened.

But he, sadly: "Even if I do not lose you," he said, "your one desire to change the life you are leading shows me that you are not happy with me."

He had let go of Juliette's wrists. Then, more courageous, she said:

"Now then. Why dramatize? Can you not understand that I want to go to the theater, to receptions?"

And she added, cunningly: "If you loved me as much as all that, you would not deprive me of those pleasures."

Her lips twisted as though she were going to cry. Pierre looked at her with suspicion, then he felt awfully bad when he realized that during the four years of their married life she was thus able to keep to herself her boredom, her secret desires and her rancor.

Then he cried. He cried and sobbed.

She felt awkward, just as if she had not understood, and remarked with simplicity: "Come. Come."

When he stopped crying, she kissed him on his forehead, asking: "So you forbid me to go to see Madame Dugormay?"

He shook his head sadly and replied: "I no longer forbid you to do so. But you know what would make me so happy."

He left for his office.

When she remained alone, Juliette was much embarrassed.

Her husband's unexpected gentleness, at the end of their argument, had disarmed her.

Had he persisted in absolutely forbidding her from making her call, she would have frankly rebelled against his selfish authority. Alas! He did not.

She sat down dreamily, near the window.

Suddenly she noticed her bruised wrists. Quickly losing her head, she convinced herself that her husband had ill-treated her. She muttered:

"The Brute!"

But this argument, while encouragement for her to go to see Madame Dugormay, was useless since at that very instant she realized that Pierre had not forbidden her to pay her call but had left the matter up to her. Immediately,

she considered that, during their struggle, her husband had lacked loyalty, so she felt no more remorse.

So she went out.

At the Mansion House Juliette met several of her former friends. They were not very much surprised to see her, in the circumstances, since they knew that Madame Dugormay had previously visited her.

They greeted her graciously. The Vice-Governor's wife was particularly charming to her.

Again Juliette spoke a great deal and the scene she had had with Pierre increased her brilliancy tenfold.

Juliette now felt that she at last had secured her long expected revenge.

When she left, her friends shook hands with her.

Juliette would have liked to kneel down before Madame Dugormay and cry out her gratitude and love to the one who was so kind and gentle to her and who had vanquished the prejudice of the unjust town.

Accompanying her to the door of the parlor, Mme. Dugormay said: "This winter, we expect to give several parties. Won't you come to them?"

Juliette Lancet muttered: "I thank you, Madame, I shall be very glad indeed."

The Vice-Governor's wife added: "I hope Monsieur Dortigny will be able to come with you."

Juliette nearly fainted and leaned against the wall for support. She did not say one word and remained motionless as though dead.

Already, Madame Dugormay asked: "What is the matter, Madame?"

She was preparing to call her servant when Juliette replied painfully: "It . . . it is nothing. A fainting spell . . ."

Then she passed her pale hand over her forehead, saying: "You are mistaken, Madame."

The brutal crumbling of her dream stunned her and her legs weakened under her.

She remembered Madame Dugormay's first call and whispered with confusion:

"Dortigny, the engineer, he lives . . . he lives on num-

ber twenty-eight of the street I live on . . . next door to my house. . . .”

The Vice-Governor's wife realized the mistake she had made.

“But . . . then,” she questioned, “to whom have I the honor . . .”

Juliette did not dare to pronounce her name, her despised name upon which her father's infamy had splashed mud. What she wanted to do was to run away to some distant place.

But Madame Dugormay must be such a kind woman. So then, in a trembling voice, she whispered: “Juliette Lancet.”

That very evening, Juliette received the following note from the Vice-Governor's wife:

“Madame:—

“I am indeed sorry. Through a misunderstanding, I extended an invitation to you, which was meant for some one else. I beg you to forgive me and not to hold it too much against me.”

THE "EMPIRE" SUGAR BOWL

By ANDRE DAHL

(From *Les Œuvres Libres*)

I LOVE Jeanne. It is not the kind of "love at first sight" that makes you catch a cold in the head under a balcony and causes you to get run over by a taxi just because you are dreamy and distracted. No! My love is more modern than that; it is made to fit our small souls; it is tranquil, submissive, it is Parisian love, the waiting kind. To furnish a comparison which might have some chance of being understood in our present-day times, my love is not the forty-horsepower, Sporting-Torpedo type, it is a two-seated cycle-car which runs with less speed but knows just where it wants to go.

I must admit that an examination of things reveals that my cycle-car runs pretty well. From August, when it started running on the beach at Dinard (the French Atlantic City), until now, it has gone some. Jeanne knows that I love her. She knows it because of much fond hand-pressing, because of the languid glances that I studied at length in front of my mirror and because of thousands of attentions I have paid to her. Above all she knows it because tonight, at last, on our way out from the vaudeville theater, I told her so, while Poussenot, her husband, ran to get a taxi.

It is much more convenient to confess one's love to a lady at night under cover of the traffic rumblings on the grand boulevards: one does not hear her sigh nor see her blush. All remorse is avoided.

"Jeanne, I love you," said I to her.

"It is the old story! That's what it is not to have a car!"

Thus the conversation continued, charming in its unexpectedness, until Poussenot returned triumphantly on the steps of the cab.

"I have found one who is willing to work," he cried to us.

"Me too," I said to Jeanne as I accompanied her to the edge of the sidewalk.

I left the couple with a very significant hand-grasp. Unfortunately, in the mix-up of our arms, I made a mistake and it was the husband's hand that I pressed lengthily while at the same time I stroked the end of his fingers.

Since then, I learned from her that he said to his wife:

"That poor Edmond must need money. He shook hands with me as he would with some one whom he could rely upon."

Now I must say (I was delaying this confession which will cause me to be severely judged, as much as possible) that Gaston Poussenot is my old friend. We were college chums at Lyon and together we flunked the same examination for our degrees, for two years we served in the same regiment of the army and together we were sent on details. Afterwards, he married and, succeeding his father-in-law, he became G. Poussenot & Co. and sold braces (suspenders), the "Poussenot" suspender which does not uncrease pants. I remained a bachelor and, living peacefully upon a moderate-size income, I practice the delightful trade of "lounger" in which there is never an unemployment period.

It took Dinard to make us meet—that sort of postal-card beach where the sea advances timidly as though it were afraid to compete with the casinos. Our first interview was no doubt somewhat too familiar: I happened to open the door of my room while in my underwear, to get my shoes, and opposite me, on the other side of the carpet, he did the same thing as I did, exactly the same thing.

"Poussenot! You, here?"

"Vitrin! Gee, what luck!"

And we exchanged a few words, without either of us leaving the respective frames of our doors, just like two familiar old portraits, much to the horror of an Englishwoman who must have thought we were rehearsing a vaudeville turn. He introduced me to his wife at *apéritif* time.

"This is Edmond Vitrin, a friend of mine for the past twenty years, an inseparable school-chum. Each week, he was the twenty-third of his class and I the twenty-fourth.

Finally, the teacher used no longer to call off our names and merely said: "Twenty-third and twenty-fourth, same as usual." Then, turning to me, he said: "Jeanne, my wife."

I hate being introduced at a café because I usually drop a glass when I bow or offer my seat. Sure enough, what I expected happened! My drink (*the kind they used to like in America before prohibition*) floated gracefully from the table to the sidewalk.

"Are you as upset as all that?" laughingly asked Mme. Poussenot of me.

The greatest cordiality immediately reigned. Of course we had to lunch together and drink a bottle of wine, *i.e.* Chambertin ninety-six, which was so young that they had to bring it to us in a little wicker cradle. It was at dessert that I started to love Jeanne. My goodness, but dessert certainly suits women fine. Their complexion brightens, their hands slide across the table to pick multi-colored sweets, they are no longer hungry, all they try to do is to please. Finally it is conceded that foolish things can be said at dessert. We did not fail in this respect. The affair was such a gay one that we all promised to meet again that very evening. And, still laughing, we left the restaurant and went back to our hotel.

On the following days we led the life one leads on the seaside: the customary excursion to the rock from which one has such a magnificent view upon a popular advertising poster; the horrible performance of a road company dragging with them the "Great Parisian Success," which is badly played by actors who still carry with them the odor of the railroad train they came in; bathing time, two or three bathing suits which are looked at with a certain amount of interest; and then the sickly looking croupier at the Casino, who announces "*Rien ne va plus*" as though he were speaking of his stomach.

I discreetly courted Jeanne, commencing with the indispensable: always to be of the same opinion as the woman one desires. It is in this manner that I agreed to consider very ordinary-looking twilights as "Venetian skies"; to call Wagner's music a "band for philosophers";

and to wear open-necked shirts in which one always seems to be expecting the executioner for the following day.

One morning, Poussenot went back to Paris where his presence was wanted for a huge deal, five hundred thousand suspenders which the Soviet Government wanted for the Russian army. After a cordial farewell which we wished him on the station platform, and after our handkerchiefs had waved for the necessary length of time, Jeanne and I went off together with our hearts full of gladness which remained unexpressed.

Only the following typographical line-up can give an idea of how delicate our first interview was.

We said to ourselves:
"Do you think Gaston
will be away for only four
days, my dear friend?"

But we thought:
"Shall we be let alone
for a time?"

"His business takes so
much of his time . . ."

"You are right, I am in-
deed lonely now."

"As long as he allows me
to keep you company, we
shall speak of him."

"We shall try and not as
much as think of him for
one instant."

"He is an excellent man
and I love him very much."

"That will not be diffi-
cult; it has already been a
long time since he has been
but a Platonic friend to
me."

"Would you like 'us to
dine together tonight? You
will be less lonely . . ."

"We shall start off by
having a good time to-
gether."

"Would it not be com-
promising?"

"We must not go too
quickly at that."

"Do you mean to say that
you still worry about what
people will say?"

"I know a quiet little
place out of the way."

"I know you are well behaved and I have no fear. What can be finer than true friendship?"

"We understand each other quite well. It is a little summer love affair of no importance."

At any rate, I imagine those were the secret thoughts of Mme. Poussenot. But the way she had of suddenly becoming coquette, of showing herself off in a new dress, with her soft arm leaning too much upon my own as though she were a convalescent patient taking her first outing and with eyes which were not sleepy—all this led me to believe that those were the thoughts she meant to express when we sat down to table.

"Lobster '*à l'Américaine*'?" offered the head waiter with the same look of complicity which he would have had if he had wanted to say to us, "We can offer you a screen if you wish."

"Lobster!" cried Jeanne.

Alas! twenty minutes later, a piece of shell slipped into my third upper molar, destroying a perfectly well cemented gold filling, and as a result, I suffered from the most frightful toothache. The brilliant speaker and ingenious lover that I had planned to be disappeared in the face of the left cheek which immediately commenced swelling. It swelled to such an extent that, thinking I had my mouth full, the waiter dared not to bring on the next course!

Four days! My toothache lasted four days, during which all I could do was to lock myself in my room, with a burning head, a swollen eye, gargling with marshmallow preparations and surrounded with tubes of aspirin. Four days I remained at my window from which I saw Jeanne going to and fro upon the beach! Four days at the end of which Gaston returned, Russia being at last supplied with suspenders that do not uncrease pants!

"Well, old man," he said to me, "you have been ill? Jeanne was bored to death while I was away. Now we are returning to Paris. Come to see us there. Phone is Bergere (Central) 44.17. Just invite yourself to lunch. We will cook you some tapioca and pudding for your little teeth. . . . Now oblige me by remaining in your room and not

seeing us off at the station, which is full of draughts! See you soon!"

After this, I waited for the swelling of my cheek to go down and I too returned to Paris, three days after the Poussenots.

In business it is difficult to close a deal which was badly started, but in love it is theoretically impossible. It took one month of efforts on my part to obtain even a sigh. I simply clung to Bergere (Central) 44.17. I lunched with my friends four times. I took Jeanne to the Horticultural Exhibition where I never had such a warm heart or such cold feet. I dragged the couple to the theater, and I experienced the exciting pleasure of saying to the wife in front of the very husband:

"Would you care to join me in my '*baignoire*,' this evening?"

One remains content with little . . . I risked a few allusions to our four days at Dinard which were so well wasted. If the expression did not seem to me so stupidly out of place here I would say that, little by little, I again began to grasp hold of the animal's hair. Jeanne gave me a date in a department store; she failed to keep it but her intention was a nice one indeed.

Another time I was able to take her home in a taxi but it was driven by such a wild chauffeur that all we thought of was to pray God to save our souls. And then, finally, came this night at the vaudeville theater where I just said to her:

"Jeanne, I love you! When will you be mine?"

I asked the operator for 44.17 at a time when Poussenot-the-Suspenders was sure to be at his office. It was she who answered:

"It is you, dear friend? How goes it?"

"Just the same. The illness which I called to your attention last night after the show continues to affect me. . . . Are you alone?"

"Quite alone. I thought of you this morning. . . ."

"Ah! That was nice!"

"Yes, while I was eating lobster. . . ."

"Cruel thing! Tell me. . . . Hello, hello! Have you thought it over?"

"Yes. You are a silly boy. . . . Why not just remain good friends?"

"But, we shall remain good friends, after . . ."

"Listen. Maybe. . . . Hello! Fifteen bottles of red wine for the kitchen, eight bottles of white, four pounds of cooking salt, a bottle of port and some floor wax . . ."

I realized that some one had just entered and I answered:

"All right, Madame, we will deliver it all tonight with a dozen big kisses and a box of mixed caresses."

I had not seen Jeanne since the confession. I waited for her to come out of her home, then I went all the way around the block and appeared to meet her quite naturally, just as though I were coming to visit her.

"There is the grocer," she said to me smilingly, "the grocer to whom I gave such a large order. You understood, my great friend, that my washwoman entered the boudoir from which I was phoning?"

"Your great friend understood it all," I replied in a somewhat disappointed tone of voice, for, when a woman who called you "my friend" calls you "my great friend" that does not prove that you have in any way entered into her heart.

And I added with an accent of sincere prayer, which suddenly made me regret having never become an actor, or at least having never made phonograph records:

"Jeanne, I desire you with mad desire! You have given me too much of yourself to refuse me the rest! Give me your lips . . ."

"Right in the middle of the Boulevard Haussman?"

"The name of the boulevard makes no difference. Everybody cannot kiss at the same time on the same boulevard. And it will not even be ridiculous. . . . I know a trick. I shall say to you: 'Farewell, Cousin!' And I shall pretend to be going off upon a long voyage. It is quite natural that we should kiss each other . . ."

"How funny! Farewell, Cousin . . ."

She offered me her mouth and at the same time a deep look; but, just at this moment, a stupid newsy, who was selling evening papers, ran into us and I nearly crippled myself on her hatpin. Then she disappeared, like a beautiful dream.

I find a special delivery letter from Poussenot:

"My dear Vitrin,

"Will you come to my office, rue Rougemont, without fail. It is on account of a matter of great importance.

"Yours,

"GASTON POUSSENOT."

Why not admit it? This curt note worries me. First of all I look forward to the worst possible catastrophes, a confession of Jeanne to her husband, a duel. A duel? No! I should have received witnesses, and not a special delivery. Maybe it is about a contract for suspenders to be supplied to the War Department, and about which I might slip a word to little Lea Bernac, who is the mistress of the Minister's grandfather. I set my alarm clock for eight o'clock, I re-read twenty pages of the French Encyclopedia, which when all piled up near the bed make a fine table, and I fall asleep. . . .

"Oh! the snout! the bum!" No sooner had I entered his office than he rose, locked the door, with a weak hand pointed to a chair and said to me:

"Old man, I will go right to the point. I sell suspenders, but not eye bandages. And I have a perfectly good eyesight! You are courting my wife! Don't protest, it is useless! You have been, you are, or you will be her lover. From my point of view, it is the same thing; I would perhaps prefer you to have already been: she would then already be sick of it. You can well believe that I did not believe one word of your Dinard toothache story!"

"But my swollen cheek? . . ."

"Swollen? Why swollen? Maybe because of extraordinary kisses! The other day, after the vaudeville, you

fiddled with my hand in a way which was not meant for me. When you lunch at home, Jeanne spends twenty minutes more dressing. Consequently, I tell you so quite plainly, that is enough! Evidently, I realize that I am not very Parisian, but I should worry about that! I do not wish to be deceived by my wife, first of all for personal reasons of taste and also on account of my business. In order that my suspenders be solid, it is necessary . . . that my home be so, too. I like quietude."

"Will you let me speak . . ."

"To my wife? No!"

"Not to your wife! To you! Gaston, you reason like a fish. Your wife and I are two excellent comrades . . ."

"But I know it, old man! Jeanne is an exceedingly faithful spouse; as for you, you would never take the wife of a friend, of that I am convinced! And yet, you would both deceive me because neither one of you has anything to do, because it is a fatality and because a husband has too much work to do. Do you understand? I do not wish to have to disturb detectives, to listen at the door of a hotel room, and hear you trotting bare-footed over the floor. I prefer to tell you, in a friendly way: 'Make your calls more scarce! Invent a voyage! Beat it!' I want a wife who takes care of her home . . ."

At this point our conversation has become audible throughout the entire store.

"If I have correctly understood, you are kicking me out of the house?"

"No dramatic language! I am just showing you a way to save your neck!"

"Is that a threat?"

"It is a presentiment."

"I have a terrible will-power . . ."

"I have an excellent revolver."

"Do not believe for one instant that I am giving in to ridiculous fear! If I go, it is to spare your wife the slightest annoyance of any kind. But I wish to tell you . . ."

We both rose, we reached the office door.

". . . that all this affair is stupid, that you will regret

my friendship, a pre-war friendship, a real, close friendship . . ."

We cross the store.

" . . . that it even takes all our old childhood memories for me to stand for such rudeness on your part."

Upon reaching the door which opens on the street, I seek to say something vexing.

" . . . And that I leave you to your suspenders, your dirty Poussenot suspenders, that make people's shoulders sore and ruin people's pants. A profiteer's suspender, which is worth a quarter and well paid for at that price!"

On the street, I went away very quickly and found my revenge.

Here it is! I went to Bloch and Mossé, antique dealers on rue Vignon, and purchased a magnificent sugar bowl of the "Empire" style, in gilded bronze, with the eagle and the crown. I am assured that Napoleon nearly used it. That is not impossible: this great traveler must have used so many sugar bowls. I send it to Jeanne with the following note:

"Dear Madame and Friend:

"A deserving case in the province of Morvan, that has been called to my attention (an old man who was forgotten at a railroad crossing by his family) compels me to leave Paris for a few weeks. In order that I may be forgiven for this sudden departure, here is a sugar bowl *which comes from la Malmaison* and which a museum would be proud to possess among its collection. I quite realize that it will be out of place in the midst of the furniture which was *chosen* for you by your husband. But your good taste will, I am sure, find the corner which it requires to *bring out its value*, for it is worth the while, and it will remind you of the sweetness of the too short moments during which we became acquainted with each other.

"Will you believe in my eternal devotion.

(signed) "E. VITRIN."

A first I underlined only three passages, then I finally underlined the entire letter, little by little. I seem to have written between the lines. It looks solemn.

And now, Gaston Poussenot, imbecile, who believes he will be happy because I shall no longer come to lunch—I who ate so little and tried so hard not to spot the tablecloth—now we shall see! The enemy is in the fort! Your quietude has gone.

My offensive, what I shall call the Empire sugar-bowl campaign, gives rapid results. Like those biologists of future wars who will fire terrific cultures of microbes into the enemy's lines, thus, thanks to me, the antiquities microbe—I must give it some sort of name—is ravaging the Poussenot home. I received a special delivery from Jeanne. It was illegible, scribbled with that middle-aged and useless tool, a post-office pen.

“My Friend:

“What is happening? Why this departure? What close ties do you wish to break? My heart beats madly since I received your letter . . . but what madness it was to purchase that sugar bowl! All morning long, I unsuccessfully tried to find it a place in the parlor. Don't worry! I will buy it a stand upon which it will remain alone, the only souvenir of you that I have.

(signed) “JEANNE.”

A stand! I tremble with secret joy. I imagine I hear the argument of the Poussenot couple, Gaston's refusal, Jeanne's insistence, this motive for a dispute which my devilishness has just installed in that house, that sugar bowl of Imperial style, which will soon become imperative.

And I actually touch the very limit of voluptuousness when, two days later, I receive from the maid (whom I bribed) the following report:

“Sir:

“As I promised the gentleman, when the gentleman gave me fifty francs, I have the pleasure of announcing to the gentleman that everything is going quite badly. It is all about the Empire sugar bowl. The first night, they had a dispute in the parlor and, seeing that there are curtains over the doors, I was able to hear nothing of what Madame said. But, happily, Monsieur yelled!

"That stand looks rotten! I have family furniture; that is sufficient."

"Well, that is the limit! Not one centime for an Empire-style parlor!"

"Your dowry? Your dowry is invested in business, rue Rougemont."

"Not so many joys in life?"

"As I was telling, Monsieur, I was not able to understand everything, but the word *antiquity* was often pronounced, even as I consider that it isn't very polite for a man to blame his wife for her age.

"This morning, Madame left the house at nine o'clock and she returned at noon with a carriage full of filthy things: a fender, a small table, two cups with three saucers, a three-legged armchair, a dozen plates in which no one will ever eat. In helping me to put everything in its place, she said to me:

"Monsieur will say what he likes! He will not prevent me from placing an Empire sugar bowl in Empire surroundings. And shucks! if he is not pleased, I have enough of living in the midst of this dirty old furniture of his."

"I would have liked to write to Monsieur, as to what the boss said when he returned, but Tuesday I do not wait at table; it is the movie night of the servants in the building. I shall keep Monsieur posted with the discreteness as I promised Monsieur, the day Monsieur promised me fifty francs.

"I express my greetings.

(signed) "ANTOINETTE."

I launch my second attack: the antique dealers. Following my instructions, discreetly and at various different times, every curio dealer in the district between the Madeleine and the Etoile sends to Poussenot's home cards, invitations to visit showrooms, and photographs of Empire-style furniture. Old Mother Balzanni, from the rue d'Astorg, must be writing to the husband: "I know, sir, that you are

furnishing your place in the Empire style, etc." Lastly, in proper style, Bloch and Mossé are to go to see Jeanne this very day with three prints and to whisper into her ear:

"What fits in best with the Empire parlor is a dining-room set from Normandy. By looking around carefully, one manages to find fine specimens of old brass . . ."

I passed in front of the Poussenots' house. There were three carriages in front of the door. The janitress looked as though she were presiding over the installation of new tenants. The curtains in the parlor have been changed.

Crazy Gaston, that wanted his wife to take care of her home, are you satisfied now? And do you realize that a friend you have known for twenty years is a good deal less encumbering than furniture which is a century old?

A letter from Antoinette.

"I waited to give news to Monsieur, until I could get a free corner in which to write. The apartment is turned upside down. The sofa upon which Monsieur used to sit with Madame has been replaced by a thing in forged iron and which nobody could possibly give a name to. We call it: the thing. It looks like a piece taken from the elevator gates . . . Monsieur can now imagine. . . .

"Monsieur Poussenot and Madame hardly speak to each other any more. Monsieur does not come back to lunch. The dining room is completely upset. There are only two armchairs, whose backs are broken, and a kettle which takes me two hours to shine. On Madame's desk I found a list which I copied:

"Normandy wardrobe. Sideboard in Cherry-wood, 6 feet 3 high. 6 Armchairs. Bread basket. 2 small cupboards 3 feet 9 x 3 feet 3. Directoire Bed-room furniture set.

"(To be seen rue de la Boétie.)"

"Last night the cook overheard this part of a conversation. Monsieur said:

"But then, for Heaven's sake; what shall we do with my family's furniture?"

"We'll buy a country house for them; they are not fit to be seen anywhere else anyway!"

"Then, Monsieur left the place after letting out a word that I would not dare to repeat to Monsieur. After which Madame continued to hang up pictures.

"I express my best feelings.

(signed) "ANTOINETTE."

I have just met Gaston Poussenet. Has it anything to do with old furniture? He has aged ten years. One feels that having reached the age of forty-five, an age at which habit has become difficult to overcome, all of a sudden he suddenly missed everything: his armchair, the dishes from which he had eaten for so long a time. Furthermore I noticed that he limped: one of the worm-eaten Normandy armchairs must have broken down under his weight. . . . Altogether he has grown thinner. One feels that he is at the mercy of a new piece of furniture. . . . He is on the verge of madness, the kind that comes on you slowly, the kind that is known to all men whose wives come home, every single night, with a dust-covered piece of bric-a-brac. Were I the director of the Bureau of Proverbs at the Ministry of Public Education, I would write:

"Revenge is a dish which must be eaten when old!"

Poor, suffering thing that I am! I have fog before my eyes and I am under the impression that every minute somebody sits down upon my heart. It is all over! At the café which I have just left and where I asked for some papers to read, I cried over a comic sheet and, from time to time, the waiter, scratching his ear, came and dried the table.

That is because I have fallen from so high! As it is customary in such cases, I recall the slightest details of the catastrophe.

Rue de Provence . . . 5.10 a.m. . . . In a passage where there are lots of hotels. All of a sudden, at the corner of the street, I see a silhouette which is well known to me . . . the hat is a new one . . . but the coat is the same . . . Jeanne . . . and holding her arm . . . black overcoat . . . bowler hat . . . a man . . . who looks . . . and crosses . . . while Jeanne remains on the sidewalk.

Automatically—Ah! that wild beast instinct—my hand slips into my gun-pocket, although 'tis only my tobacco that I keep there. And I rush forward.

“Jeanne!”

“You?”

From her tone of voice, I realize that she is already far off. Not a single little muscle of her entire body makes the slightest move towards me.

“You were following me?”

“Don't you believe it! I just happened to be passing . . . I saw . . . I saw Jeanne . . . coming out . . . and yet surely that was not Gaston . . .”

“Yes indeed, yes indeed,” she said. “But you saw him only from the rear. And then you might believe that it is only to forget you. Had you seen his face, with his bony cheeks, a pale complexion, a wilful chin and a small, flat forehead which is divided into two parts by a lock of hair, you would have understood. . . . After all, it is your fault! . . . He fits in so well with my Empire-style parlor!”

PRO AND CON

By CHARLES DERENNES

(From *Les Conteurs Inédits*)

GABRIELLE is my best friend. Being young, pretty, and widowed, she would never lack people disposed to flirt with her had I not completely monopolized her for myself for a period which has now become almost three years. To achieve this result has required all the skill and astuteness which I possess, but today I am amply rewarded for my efforts and nothing pleases me more than to flirt with Gabrielle.

Flirt?

Here we must come to an understanding. The flirtation which I refer to is absolutely without jealousy, afterthought or self-interest, while being perfectly innocent in spite of a certain egoistic character which it possesses. For the woman Gabrielle is, as for the kind of man I am, this flirtation reflects merely the politeness and charm of a delightful friendship.

For example, I may say, among other things, this sort of thing to Gabrielle:

"How utterly charming you are today—even more delightful today than you were yesterday! You must stop your progress or I shall not know how to express myself tomorrow!"

Or, again, perhaps I may say, "What fairy made that wonderful hat for you!"

Gabrielle has no doubts concerning my sincerity or my good taste. This fact, however, does not prevent her from replying, "You are not so keen as you were, my friend! Happily, you don't believe your own words."

Upon this, we smile at each other, experiencing a secret satisfaction difficult to express in mere words. In fact, we are, so to speak, accomplices. A thousand tiny agreements

unite us much more effectually than love and all its aids could do.

To these understandings we owe the rare savor of our association. Across a salon our looks meet with comprehension, our gaiety becomes reciprocally enhanced and our small worries are mutually solaced. The feeling of security and superiority which we know is rare and uncommon. The evil which we fondly imagine may be said of us echoes in our hearts like delicious music.

I do not believe that any man and any woman of our time have been more able to supply, each to the other, joys of subtle charm and savor. This morning it had been arranged that I should go to Gabrielle's house to go with her for—I have forgotten what. However, the object is not specially interesting.

"You must come very early," had been her command. I obeyed her. It was eleven o'clock when I rang her bell. Eleven o'clock in the morning! No mere lover could permit himself such a liberty. I smiled at my luck, for I am always very proud of myself. My ring was answered by Julie, Gabrielle's maid, whose benevolent expression and confiding eyes are saved for my especial case.

"Monsieur may remain perfectly patient, for Madame needs only five minutes more."

Among my various privileges, however, I possess the right to protest violently, in a comradely way. I now avail myself of this right and approach the room where my friend is completing the process of accommodating her grace to the daily vogue. "Oh, every one knows what those five-minute waits of yours are! Your delay is a crazy one! Absurd! Had I known . . ."

From the other side of the wall a merry laugh forms a clear and ringing accompaniment to a lovely, mocking voice. "Bravo! How good-natured you are this morning! Ksss—Ksss! Didn't I say only five minutes? And you may come in, anyway, if you want to count them!"

I enter. Confound it! There she is, still at her dressing table and clad in a white house dress. I shrug my shoulders and Gabrielle does likewise.

"You know nothing about such things. When I have reached this stage of my toilet I am nearly finished."

But she has not finished, by any means. She is nowhere near finishing. Of course, the prettiest woman in the world thinks her face is never pretty enough. Gabrielle, while carefully perfecting the details of her own, is evidently charmed to take some toll from mine. At the mirror she occupies herself with a thousand tiny matters whose utility wholly escapes me. Why any more dark tint for the left eye? And why must some be removed from the right? All was very well as it was! Now a new layer of cream for the tip of the nose! And what now? Heavens, I might have known it. Of course the curls were wrong! Oh, come, come! I shall explode, roar terribly—I have a right to. Yes, I have a right to, but I become suddenly aware that I no longer wish to take advantage of it.

For my eyes are caressed with so many pretty gestures! My nose is tickled with such perfumes! How charming a young woman's room in the morning, with a charm more touching and delicate when man and woman are sure of themselves; when, for example, you and I can say that we have never possessed the occupant of that chamber and that we do not desire to possess her!

Gabrielle rises. What! So soon!

"Julie, my gray tailor-made. No, the green one. Oh, either one. Ah! Are you quiet at last, over there? Fortunately! I am going to slip into my dress. You can busy yourself with freshly parting your hair. It is awry on one side. You must have had a country barber this morning."

At last we emerge into the street, nearly reconciled. It is half after eleven.

"Gabrielle, that 'tango' tailor-made is adorable."

"Be careful, or you will sprain your mind! Humph! You are almost nice, at last. And for that, I am going to give you a welcome surprise. You know we were going to see the pictures of the American Orientalists? Well, I will let you take me somewhere else."

"Nice of you, rather!"

"Yes, we will stroll about like rural folks visiting the capital." And then, abruptly and without transition, she adds, her eyes intoxicated with life, her throat filled with a breath of air inhaled as with the love of tasting it, "Gracious! What a heavenly day!"

Yes, indeed, it is a heavenly day, so heavenly, in fact, that I consider it wholly useless to reply cruelly to the numerous impertinences expressed by my dear friend. It is spring, full spring. Not yet has spring become arrogant. Not yet is it, as one may say, prosperous and successful, and at the point when its pompous title will be the Paris Season—that fine lot of words—the time when spring is infatuated and sure of itself, the springtime of Russian ballets and Persian fêtes in the bewildered parks of the Ile-de-France. No, thank heaven. Our spring is only a timid child, still awkward. Though ambitious, it would still hide away from the full glare of the skies. It is a page-like springtime, the restless springtime of De Musset, the sentimental and jesting springtime of the birds and midinettes.

We descend the rue Royale. We turn to the left. The sunny alleys and the great trees of the Tuileries, powdered with green, draw us toward them. We enter this great garden where, even under the clearest of skies, it always seems to me that there are fairies dancing in circles. Children are at decorous play. An old gentleman in a tall top hat suggests, from afar, a scarecrow neglecting its real function to attract the sparrows.

We pass near by. The old gentleman seems so happy and good-natured that it is surprising not to hear all the children in the garden call him grandpapa in chorus.

A touch of melancholy and sadness suddenly invades the scene. Why did we come here? I remember how, once when I was ten years old, I slapped one of my little playmates merely because he danced joyously before me, without knowing that I was full of bitterness because I had been allowed no dessert that day. Similarly today, the face beside me, radiant with pleasure, irritated me singularly. What could I do to anger my fair companion and disturb her insulting serenity?

"Come, my friend. Do you really like this promenade?"

"You are disagreeable and I won't detain you at all."

My tone changes. "Oh, I am sad, without knowing why. Let us sit down awhile."

Gabrielle accepts the invitation so benevolently, and addresses me, as she would a spoiled child, with so sweet and gentle a voice, that my bad temper turns merely upon myself. I'm sure I don't know where the ill feeling came from, and on such a day, too! Perhaps, after all, one should not go strolling aimlessly about Paris with a lady.

"You are feeling badly? Oh! Heartache, I suppose. That girl—that little friend of yours . . ."

Dear me, that must have been the explanation. Of course. I should probably have preferred the company of my little friend Annie Perth to the society of Gabrielle, at least for the moment. But Annie Perth, with her blue eyes, pretty limbs, childish smile and amiable chatter, would be absent in London for another week. Besides, I wasn't thinking of Annie Perth at all.

"No, it is not what you think it is. I am out of sorts, that's all. I am having a kind of migraine of the heart."

Gabrielle's throat swelled slightly. Would the result be a laugh or a sob? But why a sob? What a stupid hypothesis! Gabrielle laughed heartily.

"Poor fellow! Well, I will wager you that I can give you a marvelous remedy!"

"Oh! A remedy for simple idiots!"

"Not at all. Another surprise. Isn't my handbag full of agreeable surprises for you this morning? You are getting better already! Your face is just like the face of a child who has been offered a sweetmeat. Open your mouth and close your eyes. Or rather, open your ears. A friend of mine is just crazy about you. How is that?"

"Don't make fun of me."

"I can prove what I say." And Gabrielle drew a letter from her muff. The letter spoke of me, in fact, in somewhat flattering terms, but the pestiferous Gabrielle, merely to get me interested, had torn the writer's signature from the bottom of the last page and I did not know the handwriting.

I made a face and gave back the letter. Under such circumstances any attitude that one can take is likely to be ridiculous. However, I did not wish to present the idiotic manner of a person who has such experiences every day. Gabrielle observed me closely and, doubtless, maliciously.

"Well?"

"Why, why, I am delighted—er—charmed, of course. Yes, yes. Surprised, but charmed. Who is the lady? Dark or blonde? And pretty?"

"If she wasn't pretty, I shouldn't have had anything to do with the matter. She's pretty—and blonde."

"Blonde! What luck!"

"The dark ladies all thank you!"

I reply to Gabrielle's clear eyes, which regard me with no tenderness from beneath her dark eyebrows. "Oh, you won't be angry over such a small matter. I said 'What luck!' merely because you are the only dark lady in the world who is beautiful to me. And then besides . . ."

But my compliment fails to appease my friend. She shakes her head disdainfully and murmurs, as she attacks me, "Don't throw fuel on the fire!" To this remark she adds a few syllables which seem fairly to buzz as she utters them. "Why, yes, it is Marie Anne Orley."

"Nannie? You are joking?"

Her surprise was indeed a fine one! Had I ever hoped to inspire such a flattering sentiment in the course of my earthly existence, I might have dreamt of that name just spoken. I never thought of such a thing. Ah! This time, it's little I care whether I seem absurd or not. Gabrielle can think what she likes of me. I allowed my joy and pride to bloom fairly forth upon my face. My whole being responded like the being of a purring cat, skilfully caressed. What good fortune! Stupid with gratitude, I bent over, seized Gabrielle's hand, and kissed it long and devotedly.

"Oh, I beg of you! Keep all that for Nannie!"

What happened? I raised my head. First I saw the old sparrow-gentleman who, strolling in front of us, thought that we were smiling indulgently at each other. Then I looked again at Gabrielle. What had I done to vex her?

Perhaps the smile of the old man, who certainly took us for what we were not, had irritated her.

"Unless—no, it isn't possible, it isn't possible!"

I lowered my head anew, uneasy, troubled, disturbed.

"Good morning, dear old fellow! I will leave you. You have no further need of me, I am sure!"

"Why, Gabrielle, even your voice—I no longer recognize it. What have I done? Of course I have need of you. We are lunching together, of course?"

"No."

The word was uttered so briefly and dryly that I considered it useless to insist. Gabrielle left me at once and before I could find a happy word to say. My eyes roved after her and I wanted, for a moment, to run and catch her.

She disappeared, however, and I then feared to understand the full truth of matters. Oh, what an error on my part and on yours, Gabrielle! And I had loved our friendship so much!

II

When, for a certain date, I face the prospect of receiving a prize or of meeting with special pleasure or good fortune, I have formed the habit of meditating a few hours in advance of the occasion, in order to have a sufficient foretaste of the hope or desire to be realized. Whatever may come afterward, a certain degree of happiness is thus secure. Disappointments come whenever they wish to come and will always find listeners.

Disappointments? I imagine them in the form of old-time, provincial maiden ladies compressed, shrunken, falsely sweet, with pointed noses, thin lips and oblique glances. For every one of our miscarried joys these unwelcome visitors precipitate themselves, uninvited, to proffer acid advice or poisoned consolation. When they knock at my door, I may, at least, have the satisfaction of replying to them, with disconcerting sincerity, "But I have nothing to complain of! You have been misinformed, good ladies. Come and see me again some day!"

Indifferent to the prospect of a sunny and luminous afternoon, I hastily returned to my lodging. A special message from Marie Anne Orley had arrived in the morning, this morning, Wednesday morning, saying that she would be at home Wednesdays after five o'clock. Truly, Marie Anne was losing no time! Was it not but yesterday, in fact, that Gabrielle had passed on to me, with an irritation which was enchanting in its very self, the flattering confidence, "A friend of mine is madly in love with you!"

In love with me? I am aware, and with pleasure, that my modesty does not permit me to believe the announcement. Madly? Oh, perhaps a little. We shall see. At all events, the adventure is very agreeable.

I perceive that my life will be lightened for some time with gentle smiles and, doubtless, with a few mild sorrows. What better favor can one ask of Heaven when one lives, like me, in the company of that ready lackey, smiling boredom, and of that capable servant, bridling idleness? A soft couch, cigarettes within reach of my hand, on a table, and journals which I will not read while the cigarettes burn themselves out in the ash tray. These things permit me to await without impatience the hour at which Marie Anne receives, and to delay for even another hour, for I would not commit the fault of seeming too eager to be received.

Nannie, Nannie!

The cigarette smoke is already building tiny landscapes and moving villas in a blue dream, and then unrolls in whorls and spirals which lose themselves at the ceiling above just as Piranesi's stairways and towers lose themselves in heavenly reveries.

A princess, always the same princess, strolls upon these terraces and sits before these fanciful porticoes. She signals to me, disappears and reappears, exactly as I prefer her to do. In a low voice I call her—"Nannie!" How charmingly the abbreviated name becomes her! "Nannie!" The name is piquant and unreal, aërial and impertinent.

Henceforth, I shall be unable to pronounce the syllables without straightway beholding, and as it were sketched before my half-closed eyes, the image of a pretty child, naked, rosy, with curly locks and a golden quiver, bearing

wings and deserving to be spanked by every loving youth and petted by every loved maiden.

And so my lady's name is Nannie, or, to express it better, my lady *is* Nannie. Our first appointment will soon occur. I imagine her sitting at the very end of her salon as I make my entrance. Her tiny, precious, daintily shod foot will appear like a large baroque jewel fantastically caught up by the border of her skirt. Her light hand will seem to weigh heavily at the end of the arm which will lift that hand to my lips.

What will be the color of her dress? No matter! In my dream Nannie is already sufficiently lovely to adorn any dress this evening. She will say to me, "Ah, dear sir, what a happy surprise! It is ever so nice of you to . . ."

And these simple words will resound in my heart as passionately as the most burning verses of the Song of Songs, and our glances will possess adorable complications.

A ring at the bell. Hippolyte, that incomparable old servant, immediately glides noiselessly in, slips up to me and whispers, "Of course Monsieur is not at home?"

"Just as you see!" And I calmly light another cigarette.

How annoying! Am I dreaming? Some one has passed the sentry. Feminine steps sound in the vestibule. And the imbecile Hippolyte is proclaiming, in a tone made of sugar and honey, "Yes, indeed, yes, indeed, Monsieur is at home!"

Annie! She whom Gabrielle calls my girl! Annie, who ought to be in London at this minute! And here I am, in my own person! And on whom can I vent my wrath? Hippolyte must be immediately acquitted, for Annie is "Madame" so far as he is concerned, and to "Madame" I am always at home. It is she, my poor dear Annie who is to bear the brunt. In fact, I am so sure of it that, becoming gentle at the prospect of the injustice which menaces her, I find myself surprised at my almost amiable cry as I leap towards her.

"You? Well, well! What a splendid surprise!"

Annie is more than ever like herself. She is a clear gleam in the light. She is so fresh, so young, and so lively that her laugh supplies a dazzling charm of its own.

When one hears it, he almost needs to cover his eyes with his hand.

"It's I! How happy I am! And how are you? What have you been doing? Oh, my dear . . ."

"What have I been doing? As you see, I was about to go to sleep. My eyes must be swollen up like plums. I must seem terribly bewildered and stupid. You—you are really here again. I can't believe it. I didn't expect you before next week."

"You were counting off the days on a little calendar, I hope?"

"That's all I was doing."

"Then at least I am not bothering you, you miserable specimen?"

"Oh, my dear child, your pretty voice can say very unjust things!"

I do not admire my ability to speak such words, in a tone of abandoned tenderness, without the slightest effort. It is with displeasure that I recognize in myself the mechanically acting hypocrisy common to all well-bred lovers, a hypocrisy that is the more reprehensible in my case because of the fact that I shall draw no profit from it. I was affirming to myself that I would withdraw, just a little, so that I might leap better, but at the same moment the obstacle or ditch before me grew tremendously larger.

In fact Annie was delighted and murmured, "Really! Oh, I love you! I am so glad that I can see you sooner than I even hoped to!" The deuce! There she was straightway, sitting on my knee. And there was her pretty face, offering itself as freshly, as temptingly, as a bouquet gathered in the rain!

For fear of at once burying my nose in the bouquet, I drew away a little, but not without sniffing at the flowers, anyway. "Well, what has happened? Tell me!"

"Didn't I write you? Bother! Oh, I remember! I forgot to mail the letter. That scarcely surprises you, does it?"

"Why no! It's just like you!"

"Well, it makes no difference. You remember how nice our good-byes were, just before I left for London? Well,

when I left you, what do you suppose I found at my rooms? A dispatch calling me to Mantes, to Mamma, who was sick. Why, what a face! Oh, don't be uneasy. It was only that every one was frightened."

"That's better, that's better!"

"Mamma is much better now. She had only a touch of the grippe."

"But your engagement?"

"My? Oh, yes. Well, I just cabled my director. He is always very nice and accommodating. In short, here I am. Kiss me! Again!"

I began to have certain misgivings.

All that Annie relates is clearly possible. However, my ill-humor cannot blindly accept her tale and she is fully able to invent pure hypotheses at a moment's notice which appear as probable as this story of hers. This illness of Annie's mother! A physician's certificate would be good evidence here. That forgotten letter? It may well have been written only an hour ago. The London engagement? I have never had any tangible sign of that engagement.

Conditions thus offering these possibilities and granting that Annie might have been more or less insincere, her words might readily require no alteration and her attitude in my presence need no change whatever. Certainly I had never imagined it possible that I might be irritated or chagrined should I ever learn by chance that Annie had deceived me. She is only a pastime for my idle days, only a bonbon to cheer my heart when it is without appetite. Besides, she is keen enough to know very well that I am not jealous of her and that I only wish to make a scene simulating one of jealousy.

A scene of jealousy? Happy thought! It is easy to try, and four o'clock has already struck. It is time for the scene, as the song within my heart informs me.

So I repulse Annie with a movement like the tiniest beginning of a shrug. Then, in a voice which I could desire sharper and more sarcastic, I remark, "My dear, you are presenting a whole fleet to me, though I am not old enough to be an admiral nor rich enough to equip it. I ask no explanations, but . . ."

Confound it! Annie bursts out laughing, frankly, joyously. "You are very stupid or, rather, you are pretending to be stupid! You say you were asleep when I came in? Very well. I will excuse you. You must have been having bad dreams. Get up and throw some water on your head. Then we will dine together. And after dinner . . ."

Annie, I am aware of a fury, the more terrible because it is unjust and unjustifiable, which clenches my fist and which swells in my throat. I intend to obey you, however, to show you how fully I leave all the wrong on your shoulders. You said, "Get up!" Very well, I rise. You thought that I was asleep when you arrived? See how I yawn, then, to render the imposture more authentic! But now, in return for so many efforts and so much good-will, permit me to be myself for a moment.

"You are mad," I tell her, firmly and almost dryly. "You arrive without the slightest notice. I am delighted to see you, surely; but such pleasure reminds me of country cousins whom I love very much but whom I am ready to see hanged when they pay me a surprise visit when some king or other is passing through Paris or on the opening day of the automobile show."

"Fine! I will use that idea some day."

"I will not ask any royalty of you. In short, I am sorry, but I am engaged for the afternoon and have also arranged to dine."

Annie surveys me with indulgent astonishment. Then, in a tone which she would assume to excuse herself for inadvertently jostling some unknown lady in the street, she says, "Oh! pardon me." Straightway she is at the mirror and arranging her hat.

As for me, I remark, almost piteously and humiliated with my altogether too easy success, "Well, we will do something tomorrow, eh?"

She has taken her puff from her bag and is arranging her honey-colored locks above her blue eyes.

"That's it, tomorrow. Soon, anyway." She pencils her lips with red, carefully moistens one of her fingers with the tip of her tongue, and artfully slips the finger along her

eyebrows in a calculated direction. She bestows on me a calm and courteous kiss and takes flight.

Quick! Now to run to Nannie's and if I am too early, never mind!

"I didn't think Monsieur would come back so soon. Monsieur is not ill?"

"Yes, I am, Hippolyte. That is, a little unwell—a headache. I shall not go out just now. I will have two soft-boiled eggs in a little while. I want to be left alone."

The afternoon is over. I saw Nannie. She was not seated when I entered. Her foot was not swinging below her skirt. She did not seem to be expecting me. She was standing in the midst of a lot of people of all ages, people who stupidly live to be very old, and I forgot all about kissing her hand. She said to me, "What! You? What a nice surprise," but she said the same thing to others, to many others!

And her tone was decidedly lacking. From that instant I had so little desire to devote myself to her that I immediately thought, "It will be better to keep our distance. The contrary would be out of place."

I sat down beside that pest, Nelly Schnick-Florent, who amused herself, as usual, by telling tales on Gabrielle to give herself the pleasure of making me angry. She lost her time. It is astonishing that I was not displeased today on having my most amiable friend calumniated by one of her best friends. Nelly, in vexation, changed the character of her talk, but I had already ceased to listen. I was glancing at Nannie when she was not looking.

Nannie did not look at me, but made no special effort to avoid my glance. She smiled or, to speak more exactly, she played with her smile as other ladies play with less personal ornaments, such as their rings or necklaces. When I rose, she did not even seem to notice that I was leaving. She was saying, "The jacket is coppery red, with blue and ochre trimmings. Oh! You are leaving us, dear Monsieur? But the skirt is the really marvelous thing, pleated shade for shade, and I don't know how many pleats."

I have a very clear impression that I behaved very

stupidly with Annie. Where had my head been, in fact? I could so easily have said, "Excuse me, I must pay a visit—a regular bore—but I will hurry back to you."

Had I said that, Annie would be near me now. And, if her presence failed to console me, it could readily prove the climax of my annoyance and I could then be odious and aggressive and at least console myself to that extent. That would be better, at all events, than this inglorious melancholy, this depressing review of somber feelings and gloomy thoughts, which approached me insidiously like ugly goblins of the falling night. The night was indeed bringing me pretty elves!

Humph! What now! Three little knocks, tap, tap, tap, striking upon my heart. Who is there? Ah, yes! Precisely. An old lady with pointed nose and thin lips wishes to enter. I am happy to see you, my good lady. You have truly something to say to me? Well, that is very possible. Enter, I beg you, and let us converse.

III

When I was announced, Gabrielle cried, "What! Is it you?"

My visit, which was earlier than usual, and which would have seemed so natural three days ago in spite of its early character, produced in Gabrielle an astonishment which was quite visible and the more disagreeable because it could not be sincere. Giving tit for tat, as I properly should, I said, "Do I inconvenience you? For in that case . . ."

"You? Inconvenience me? You overrate your importance."

The shaft thus launched at me was neither very heavy nor very malicious. I could only smile. Discharging the obligation, I remarked, "Try to be reasonable. I don't know what I could have said that displeased you the other morning at the Tuileries. You suddenly left me with a little air of vexation which sat as poorly on your charming self as a dress too loud would do, or as would a hat in poor taste. That caused me much pain. Just think what

you are to me, in fact. You are both my dearest friend and a vision which delights my eyes more than anything else on earth. Your reception of me today seems simply out of keeping. It does not wound my pride or my self-esteem. Much worse, it makes me sorry for you. I cherish the thought of you as I would cherish a precious trinket. Why tarnish it and depreciate it from mere caprice?"

Gabrielle cried, angrily, "Maker of phrases!"

"I make what I can, just as there are plaster images for teaching children who do not yet know how to read well, and just as one is sometimes obliged to use metaphors to reach women's minds and hearts. I am not particularly proud of the productions which I can offer you . . ."

The track is a false one. I am merely babbling. Gabrielle is becoming annoyed. How stupid all this! Tactics must be changed.

"Gabrielle, please be really nice. Perhaps no words of mine can bring back the smile I should love to see again on your lips, but at least I don't yet despair of seeing it! Come. Tell me your news. If I can succeed in pleasing you better in a few moments, let me stay near you today."

She comes and sits beside me with an air of pity which makes me wish to beat her or bite her.

"Poor thing! You truly want me to tell you my news? Look me in the eye—put out your tongue. News, indeed! It is you yourself who have news to tell me, news which is perhaps not so glorious as you would like to have. Except for that fact, I am wondering a little to what I owe the honor of your visit this morning. Come, confess. You and Nannie! Your affair is not running smoothly! The gr-r-reat illusion is no more! Well, well! I see you again as you were when I told you that that incomparable person was madly in love with you. It is a pity that I had no camera with me to preserve your peacock-like poses and the radiance which you exhibited like a village bridegroom! You may believe that I was somewhat disenchanted with you, myself, at that moment!"

I remember the praiseworthy efforts made expressly to avoid being ridiculous in Gabrielle's eyes, and so much

injustice on her part makes me indignant. "You are fibbing, you are fibbing! Perhaps I seemed amazed, embarrassed, annoyed, or simply idiotic."

"It is not I who make you say that!"

"Well, I didn't seem pleased with myself, anyhow. It is all your fault! Have I ever asked you to interest yourself in my heart affairs?"

"I was merely discharging with a man friend a mission of confidence entrusted to me by a lady friend!"

"Excuse me if I laugh! A fine business, that, at your age!"

"Go on!"

"Yes, indeed, I will. Imprudently, and because you found it amusing, because you wanted the best place in the comedy which Nannie and I were perhaps going to play, or perhaps for other reasons, you revealed something to me which was of fairly grave character. Now, furious with yourself, you oblige me to suffer the effects of your ill-humor. I might have known it!"

"You are not warm enough!"

To crown all this, I understand fully that any explanation which I can offer Gabrielle concerning her attitude runs a risk of making her smile or causing her to make fun of me. What can I do? This situation is odious and insupportable. I rise to my feet, looking at Gabrielle as a judge looks at an accused prisoner. Finally, risking all on a single throw, I exclaim, in raging accents, "The truth is then, my dear Gabrielle, that you are yourself in love with me or at least jealous of Nannie."

Insulting laughter and humiliating words are to be expected in reply. I fully know myself, and that I shall retort. The irremediable breach will be created. Well, I can't help it. It will be better that way.

"Sit down again. You are very disagreeable when you gesticulate in that way. And then, all this makes me too tired to raise my head," said Gabrielle, simply.

Is it possible that Gabrielle is also in love with me? It is too much! Through some strange association of ideas, I immediately remember the triumphal entry of Fallières in his native country, a short time after becoming the first

public man of France. Addresses, bouquets, triumphal arches, illuminations, songs and poems in French and in various dialects—according to the journalists, all these things made Fallières murmur, "It is too much!" The journalists stated besides that he appeared "radiantly moved." Perhaps these gentlemen did not see very clearly in the case of Fallières.

As for me, with all due modesty as to my position, I did not at all feel like saying, "Add no more—my heart is full." And I was not radiant or moved in the slightest degree. My feeling is rather one of inquietude and fatigue. For the moment I have the impression that I am paying dearly for something. Too much! Like others, in my quiet way, I feel that I have done nothing to deserve the troubles which are surely created by an excess of honors.

I consider myself a man not unjust or partial. I am an ordinary human being in all that the term implies, whom friends may declare to be a good fellow and whom others may call an excellent young man. While I may have cherished lofty ambitions or dreamed marvelous dreams during my young manhood, I pursued this innocent pastime only because I was certain to renounce the ambitions later and to cease any sincere desire to realize my dreams.

Modesty constitutes the only thing of which I am really proud. The quality is sufficiently uncommon to warrant a sympathetic reception on my part. I do not even think, as contrasted with so many others whom I know, that I might have played an important part in the world at an earlier epoch. I am not displeased with myself as I am, a fact permitting me to refrain from seeking excuses for my idleness, harmless uselessness and lack of achievement.

Is it not enough for one whom fate has granted a fair view of things by creating him neither rich nor poor—is it not enough for one so situated to contemplate the perpetually changing scene which Lucian of Samosate called the uncertain dream of life, that adorable expression which he has neglected to explain was stolen from Anatole France?

I do not wish people to think me old before that time has come, or to imagine that I am playing a comedy with

myself. I am not sincerely skeptical, naturally indifferent, or posing as a man of lost illusions. I simply take care of my nerves because I know them. I should not hesitate for a moment in preferring a small, ordinary annoyance to a deeply moving joy.

Love! I have loved, of course, since I admit that I have entertained entrancing dreams. Not that I can congratulate myself on the fact. All those who have inspired in me love or some similar sentiment, whether they have been amiable or not, have too often produced in me the impression that they have accorded me their presence, their smiles, their thoughts, their kisses and all the rest only as a rich man in a hurry throws a few coins to a beggar.

In fact, to love is to enrich one's choice with so much goodness and beauty that one immediately feels regrettably inferior in the loved one's presence. And the difficulties of loving are as nothing when compared with those inherent in being loved.

To be loved is a charity which comes unsought and pleases only the woman who loves. Women must indeed be without occupation to cause so many men, and even ordinary men like me, to become suddenly and unreasonably as dear to them as a fetich or beauty formula. I am not handsomer than I am wealthy, my heart is not more brilliant than my mind, yet I now find myself, God pardon me, about to become a Don Juan in spite of myself. I swear that I am not proud of it by any means. I have already had some experience of the kind, which has supplied me only with memories which cannot be revived without causing me a strange sadness or, which is much worse, a smile which is almost sardonic. Oh, memories of these pitiful tendernesses, which become less when freely offered!

There was my cousin Louise, who was twelve years old when I was eleven, and who pursued me into every corner with her roguish command, "Kiss me, please kiss me or—I'll slap you!" Alas, she was stronger than I. There was Gwendolin, who failed to consider her first name a misfortune, though her English birth excused her for that. At the age of fourteen, on a little beach where I was condemned to meet her on two successive vacations, she flashed,

when walking with the bearing of a cavalry sergeant, a smile like an open piano. This smile she devoted to me at every meeting, although it excited the jeers of my small companions and even of my people. There was Blanche, who offered me her lips in her garden when she was engaged and when I was studying for my marks in rhetoric. "Is it possible to be so absurdly young!" she exclaimed a moment after, with a hostile and outraged air. There was the mother of a friend of mine, who took me on her knee and greedily kissed me, remarking, "My, it's nice!" So that I always wished to call out, "Keep it for yourself alone since it's so nice and since you like it so much!"

There was Marie Rose, who proposed to me; and Suzanne, who was frail, blonde, diaphanous, and who proclaimed, "What a pity I must die at twenty!" and who carried the jest far enough to do what she had threatened; and Germaine, whom I met at the Soufflot Tavern, who used to wait for me early every Sunday morning at the boarding-school door, to carry me fiercely away until evening to her room in the rue des Carmes, without even asking me if I wouldn't have preferred to play cards with my friends.

And so many others! So many who, without admitting it to themselves and perhaps without suspecting their thoughts, reflected, "He's merely ordinary—so much the better! He's a coward—and that's a reason in itself. Thanks to him, I shall be his mistress in the art of love." Such states of servitude are indeed noble! Why can't I make a statement of them without ridicule and present them as reasons for retiring from active life!

I foresee what I am going to say to Gabrielle when, responding to her invitation, I shall again be sitting beside her. I shall explain to her that she spoils everything, that our friendship is a charming miracle and that Annie is always there in case of need. I shall adjure her never again to speak to me of Nannie. And if it shall seem at all difficult to carry out this programme—oh, I know too well that nothing comes easily and peace is purchasable only with effort—I shall smash everything in reach, shall shout, curse, insult her, to retire thereupon so proud and

sure of myself that even slamming the door will be unnecessary.

"Come! I asked you to sit down," repeats Gabrielle. "These are the first reasonable words that you have spoken since you came in. You make a mocking gesture. I am neither in love with you nor jealous of Nannie, but you employ judgment and logic to prove that I am, and I am supposed to concede that 'it all happens like that.' Come, now. Will you sit at my right or left? Are you afraid of me? There, at last! Now I can ask an explanation of you but, at the first unseemly or stupid smile of yours, I shall firmly show you the door."

Strange! I now might like to slam that door, but how sad I should be to go away through it!

"You are awkward and clumsy, and almost coarse. For centuries you have been an intimate, more so than husband or lover could ever be. You jest with considerable gusto over my small coquetry, my smiles, my walk, my manners and my dresses, so that I am aware that I am not an object of displeasure. Besides, when you are out of sorts and feeling ironical, you come to make me cheap compliments like those of a young poet who is all the rage. For example, 'You are one of the best things on earth for satisfying my eyes.' I know that you are too lazy to be a liar. If I please you, and if I am evidently not displeased because I please you, how could you go to the extent of taking the attitude which you took in my presence the other day?"

"At the Tuileries garden?"

"I should say so!"

"I assure you that . . ."

"Heavens! How tiresome it sometimes is to try to make one's self understood! No matter. Now, it suffices that the lady I mention announces to you that another lady . . ."

"Thinks of me as her . . ."

"Her—bother!"

"I know. The pose of a young peacock, the delight of a village swain. I am trying to be polite. I thought it would please you."

"And you act like a bounder!"

"Toward you or toward Nannie?"

"Toward Nannie and—me."

"Toward one of you in particular I might merit that reproach. One man against two women, though—no, I am not strong enough for that. You must surely be mistaken. You greatly exaggerate. Gabrielle! You are crying. I don't deserve that, either. It is the first time that you have ever cried in my presence. You break up my habits so that I fail to recognize you and am frightfully unhappy because of your tears. You are no longer yourself. You seem almost dying, Gabrielle! I must speak out in my turn, sincerely and brutally. At least, I will try. It is very difficult. Gabrielle—you are accusing me of not having made love to you."

"You have done nothing but that, in your fashion, which is a very stupid one. You have been only a perpetual tease."

"Gabrielle, you really don't know me. I tease every one I associate with and everything I chance upon—flowers, trinkets, books, the cushion on your couch, the dogs in the street, my friends, and myself, when I have nothing better at hand. I admit that I have made love to you, and in the most delicate way in the world. How do you know that there have not been moments in my life when I could infinitely desire—a little more and something a little better than the ordinary benefit of your mere presence?"

"Too late!"

"I am quite aware that it is too late. Otherwise, could I talk to you like this? I have been seeing you, breathing near you, listening to you, my hand had the right to keep yours prisoner for a few seconds. I have often regretted being unable to enjoy you more fully, but, frankly, how would you have behaved if I had asked the favor?"

"Who knows?"

"You calumniate yourself. You would have considered me stupid or presumptuous, and you would have been right. We were not playing, and, anyhow, one plays no tricks in games one loves, however difficult or needless some of their rules may seem. But just now . . ."

Our glances met too quickly and before we could hide the full truth conveyed in them. I had been in error to suggest my desire to seek fuller satisfaction in Gabrielle. It was a desire which I had perhaps never experienced at all. Ah! It is not the day which illuminates Gabrielle's red lips and her delicately white cheeks, but it is her face which, in different places, lights the air about her with dear and varied colors. Were I to take leave now without touching so much sweetness with my lips, I think I should be unhappy for months and months and stupid as the heroes of the old-time novels. It will be wisdom on my part not to lack audacity, and even imprudence, at this point.

"But now," I remark, after a silence which seems to have deprived me of my voice, "now that all is altered between us, now that our friendship cannot perceive what tomorrow may bring it—will you let me, Gabrielle—will you let me . . ."

Gabrielle bent over toward me. "Have your wish!"

And I tasted the full measure of her perfume just at the point where her ringlets overhang the back of her neck. My lips refused to leave that spot. I repeated to myself silently (I don't know why) that all this must be delicate and chaste. How good you are to my lips, Gabrielle, and how much has a sense of mine, little favored by you until now, revealed merits which I did not suspect you possessed! You have good reason to weep anew, for that leaves me just time enough to weep myself. You may go away now. Since all this is still only pleasantry, don't you think it has lasted long enough?

"Gabrielle, let me go. It is all darkness, for us both. We don't know what is happening to us. But this evening . . ."

"Yes—this evening . . ."

"May I come to see you? Perhaps we shall both understand ourselves by that time. At all events, what a moment it will be! I don't know whether I love you or not, but it will be good to tell you so if I do . . ."

"Tell me, then!"

"No. Tonight."

"Tonight, then, my friend."

On returning to Gabrielle's house six hours later, I find the door barred.

"Madame has gone away," explains the woman in charge. "No, she left no address. She said she had great need of rest. So, you understand . . ." Her glance reflects a pity which goes to my heart. She adds, "I am astonished, though, that she has not informed Monsieur."

IV

Annie never demands explanations. I do not believe that a better balanced person exists in the world. Nobody is apter at accommodating herself to what she knows and what she doesn't know. She is frightfully young and healthy. Every laugh of hers seems a happy challenge to every pain and evil chance. In her pleasure at being pretty, alert and even merely alive, she finds an inexhaustible balm which has fully immunized her so far against all ordinary heart poisons.

She does not seem even to conceive of the possibility of being jealous. Sometimes this capacity is really vexatious. And so, since Gabrielle's departure, she sees me bored, furious, perhaps even sad at times. She strokes my forehead with her hand, which is a little too vigorous, but so cool and fresh! She murmurs with a pity which is only all confidence but which I wrongly construe to be of a mocking sort, "Poor dear, come now!"

Now I received a word from Nannie, cynically informing me that her husband would be detained on business for at least two weeks in England. She hoped, she added, that her friends would not forsake her in her hideous solitude. I left the letter lying about the house, but Annie had not even the curiosity to read it. But here this morning comes a special in which Nannie invites me to dinner with her, the words "in strict intimacy" being twice underlined.

I read and re-read the letter while Annie was dressing. I smiled to myself, I assumed a satisfied appearance; or again, my eyes fixed on the paper bearing a large and rather common handwriting, I coughed and tapped my foot on the floor, as though cruelly perplexed and anxious.

I even went so far as to throw glances at Annie indicating that she had reason to complain of me. I remember once hearing an old actor who had had certain happy moments during service with Marshal MacMahon, say to his old, sobbing wife on a similar sort of occasion, "Poor thing, you are going to suffer some more!" He was a privileged fellow. Were I to try such talk with Annie she would probably ask, very kindly, if I were not feverish. Well, well. Since I cannot choose my weapons, I will use those I have.

So, on a most lovely afternoon while we were on our way to enjoy ourselves in the Bois, I suddenly tapped Annie's arm, just as she was abstractedly smiling at the fine outlook. Then, with an air which was surely somewhat stupid, I said, "By the way, I have a good story for you," and told her the whole thing, from A to Z. She listened, much amused, and then jested over the tale, begging me to explain certain points and circumstances.

"For you wish my opinion, don't you?"

"Lord, of course!"

"Gabrielle is the lady who was with you on the opening night of 'Somebody's Lips,' isn't she? Wearing a sulphur crêpe de Chine draped over a dark skirt? Neither of you looked very well. I mean, you both looked like two poorly bred people, especially the lady. She was pretty, though."

"Yes, wasn't she?"

"Yes, indeed. Women like that, however, often have knees like those of a cow. Have you ever seen them?"

"Only imagined them. I believe you are mistaken."

"Possibly. And the other one—Nannie? Funny name for a society woman!"

"Her full name is Marie Anne, my dear."

"Personally, I should as soon think of calling myself Arthur, but that is her affair. Oh, now I know! I bet you that I make a bulls'-eye by recalling that she is that little blonde whom you were walking with at the Convent of Panurge, exactly two weeks ago!"

"Whom I—what are you talking about?"

"Why, yes! You had said that you were unwell, that evening, so I got myself invited to sup with Nono and

her friend. I recognized you in the distance as we were arriving. So I said to Nono, 'My friend there is in luck, he mustn't be disturbed.' Nice of me, eh?"

"You are stupid. I wasn't in luck."

"All that has cost you dear?"

"Oh, come, Annie. Besides, that isn't the question. The lady you saw was not Nannie. You don't know Nannie by sight."

"Is she pretty, she too?"

"She is like you."

"You don't want to get into trouble."

We were approaching a pavilion that we like, whose iced drinks bear pretty and delightful reflections of the fine trees, and where rainbows dance over the well watered lawn. I was wrong in telling my story to Annie since, however kindly she may be, too many words may easily spoil the moments full of pleasant images but of few serious thoughts which I usually hope to have in such a place. But let us have done.

"It is not a question of that. The only interest I have in the matter lies in its curious feminine psychology. You are not a literary woman, thank God! You are just a woman. I ask you, in a friendly way, having too modest an opinion of my own capacity to judge such a delicate point . . ."

Annie stops me. "Do not depreciate yourself. Were women sincere, they would admit that the present lack of men is a frightful nuisance. I believe, however, that you are dealing with two mere dolls who are taking advantage of you in one way or another. How, and for what object? Neither you nor I know that, and perhaps they do not know any more than we do. There you are! If they try to cheat you, try to beat them. Get the best of them. You can, since you are warned. You have them in your fist, so to speak."

"You have an odd way of talking about it! Surely, you do not love me!"

"Have I ever told you that I *love* you? No! I am at ease with you, and feel for you all kinds of kindly senti-

ments which one can express without laying his hand on his heart or puckering his mouth up. You yourself do not *love* me. We are simply mutually pleasant to each other. I am a nice, accommodating little girl and you, unlike so many others, annoy me only when you are annoyed yourself. For that reason I shall go away, without the least anger, if you continue in this strain."

"Stay with me, Annie. We will talk no longer of Nannie and—the other one."

"Good! To show how grateful I am, I shall fully permit you to think of them as much as you want to." The artful girl knows very well what she is doing. While she will enjoy the moment and amuse her eyes with the passing scene, I, condemned to observe her permission, will think of Gabrielle and dream of Nannie. There is no fun in that. Annie would merit severe punishment.

Alas! She seems to be well aware that she is charming and that one is disarmed before her as before a child's feeble hand. She will carry her cruelty to the extent of returning home with me, superintending my toilet, choosing my shirt buttons and taking the flatiron away from my servant Joseph when my dress trousers need a specially fine crease. "Do not shave yourself any more, my dear. You will make your face red. Put on just a little powder. That's better!" And she kisses me religiously, as if performing an important duty.

"Yes—you are still a bit prickly, but even should Marie Anne (I shall never be able to swallow that name) think of utilizing your face she will probably not place her rosy lips on it after this evening."

Joseph himself appears quite confused. I remain passive, though feeling a formidable desire to make an outburst. If I only knew what is awaiting me at the hands of the incomparable Nannie! Well, heroism is essential just now. We must put a good face on matters. We must hide the blood within our wounds, which would delight our enemies, and thus follow Nietzsche's good counsel. "And you, what are you going to do this evening, Annie?"

My voice trembles slightly as I put the question. Annie laughs. "I? How do I know?"

"You know very well. In case Nannie gets the best of me, as you say so picturesquely, you intend to deceive me as agreeably as possible so that you will not feel inferior to me when we meet next time."

Annie seemed to reflect for several seconds. "And when shall we meet again?"

"Why, tomorrow, I suppose—or later this evening if you wish."

"Well, things are not just like that, my dear fellow. You need not fear that I shall fool you this evening. I shall not even go to my mother's, as I intended for a moment. Joseph will serve my dinner here—won't you Joseph? And then I shall undress, and put on a pair of your pajamas, and get one of your choicest books, which put me to sleep, you know. My, what a fine sleep I shall have!"

At bottom, this little woman is the most egoistic specimen on earth.

V

Marie Anne Orley's "strict intimacy" is not specially different from that of all Frenchwomen who are well born, well received and more or less esteemed. When I entered her salon, a little too early, as I think, but because of Annie, she had about her some ten or twelve "strict intimates," with prospects of more to come.

I really know only two or three of those people, but I feel as if I knew them all. They resemble those you see everywhere. There are two or three indulgent old people, who talk but little. There are two or three rather rude males or females of indifferent age who are as skilful in the art of chatter as in that of interjecting effective moments of silence. There is a young man who is able to provide his hostess with free tickets for the state theaters and the Conservatory competitions; another man, somewhat older, who, from time to time, adjusts his monocle and significantly coughs, thus to obtain silence and tell his latest story as an Algerian would offer peanuts at a café, with a humble smile and after placing the goods in a clean little bag. This older man is the retailer of anecdotes. Accord-

ing to him, he has innumerable connections of every sort. He is always on hand to explain the programme of the coming week, to give a foretaste of the coming gossip, and to relate the latest witticism of Tristan Bernard. And I also note the man who is the friend of the hostess's husband. He is an old childhood friend who probably heartily detests the husband but who is always present when the husband is absent, in order to overwhelm every newcomer with easy sarcasm or have the air of being the husband's watch-dog. There is the female cousin who has had so many misfortunes. And, of course, there is the Bore, with a capital *B*, the poor man who draws you into a corner and who talks and talks, and with whom you get on very well because you are hearing him for the first time and because he does not yet know how you look when you are bored. Truly a fine reception, with every prospect of a pleasant evening!

At dessert, Nannie suavely announces that she wanted to get us together because she is going to visit some good aunt or other, who lives in some devilish place like Auvergne, among the mountains—for she is so wearied at Paris, you know, without poor Hector, her husband.

Surely after that she will at least—it is the only hope which my pride now clings to—throw me one of those looks which only she can throw, one of her soft, blue glances, distilled artfully and for a prolonged moment through her lashes, which are almost too long. I am hoping for one of those glances which, according to the case in hand, serve as a delicacy handed to a feaster or as a balm applied to a wound. But nothing of the sort! Nannie limits herself to praising the charms of summer in the mountains, in the style of those who write for fashionable journals. I have had enough.

I heroically wait until a good third of my comrades in intimacy are ready to go home, for I can bear it, since they won't get me again very soon, and then, thinking that I can also take leave, I beg the tireless bore to excuse me, assure the story-teller that he has charmed me, give a respectfully protective bow to the indulgent old folks,

hand out a few pitiable flatteries to the rude people, express final sorrow for the unfortunate cousin, and promise the Conservatory ticket-monger a fine future in diplomacy or official life. Then I advance toward Nannie. "Madame, I . . ."

"You are leaving? Ah! Oh! So soon?" And, in a low tone, "In just a little while!"

I reply, before even having time to reflect, "Why, of course—certainly—most happy, dear Madame." Then the hand-kissing, of course. All eyes seem to be fixed on me. Gabrielle would say, "You are assuming undue importance." Decidedly Nannie possesses a shocking unconsciousness or else immodesty! My "strict intimacy" has not yet begun but I am well on the way to it. I quit the salon as hastily as a tenor just beginning his career at Toulouse could leave the stage after wiping off a bombardment of insults, cabbages and rotten eggs.

When my hat and overcoat have been retrieved in the vestibule I begin to breathe again. "In just a little while," she said. That was a bit vague. Happily, it commits me to nothing. She will scarcely have the assurance to pursue me to my quarters—where Annie is having such a pleasant nap! Ha! Delicate little steps precipitated after me. It is she—and just at the moment when the sight of the door-handle within reach has produced in me a state of mind like that of a shipwrecked sailor striking firm sand at last as he is swimming to safety! She is crazy, utterly crazy. What must they be saying in the salon! How my ears burn! She says, "Here, you have dropped your glove."

She has spoken very loudly. While I murmur a "thank you," which is not very convincing, she adds, in the subdued voice which she used a few moments ago to say "In just a little while," and with eyes which are strange and vague and seem to look at least ten yards behind me, "I took the glove so as to be able to run after you. I will be—where, now?—at the Orsay station, exactly at midnight."

I am not able to refrain from demanding, "You will take me with you to Auvergne—in the mountains?"

She shrugs her shoulders and seems so impatient that,

motionless as she is, she seems to tap with her foot. "Yes, or to Issy-les-Moulineaux—some place or other. How do I know? Where is your head, to put such questions at such a moment? Oh, Lord! My guests! At midnight, at the Orsay Terminal."

"Good—agreed!"

A fine state of things!

I must take account of stock. People don't start for Issy-les-Moulineaux or Auvergne in evening dress. A valise must be hastily packed. And Annie still sleeping soundly in my bed! Must I wake her? What will she say? What will she do? Any action of hers will surely seem ironic. Anything but irony, just now! I have one slim chance, however, for I know pretty nearly where Joseph will be.

If not in bed in his room on the sixth floor, which has a mirror adorned with post cards of recent ladies whose hair is dressed in the style of twenty years ago, Joseph will surely be playing bridge with usual companions, in a quiet little café just at the corner of my street and the Boulevard Malesherbes. I hasten to seek Joseph.

Sure enough, he is in the café. At sight of me, he starts in amazement. He cannot be expected to imagine anything but some disaster. He knows me well enough to realize that it would be as repugnant to me to disturb his few moments of relaxation as it would be to him to enter my room without knocking. So his face and the questions which he confusedly murmurs are so uneasy that I am very painfully impressed. I succeed, however, in presenting a good appearance.

"I am sorry to disturb you, my good old Joseph, but I must have my valise at once—two suits—soft shirts—you know just what I need?"

"Why, soft collars, small white shoes, big tan shoes, two bunches of toothpicks because you never know what you'll find in a hotel." He seems to feel very badly. I must have a sinister look, for he doesn't dare look at me from the corner of his eye!

"Can you arrange about your bridge game?"

"Oh, yes! It isn't that which makes me uneasy."

I almost want to thank him. Completing my reflections I content myself with saying, "At half after eleven—café Terminus—Orsay station. Hurry! If you forget something it will not matter." I utter the last phrase carelessly, to show Joseph that things are less grave than he feared and that I do not think of him . . .

A taxicab. Thank God, it is only eleven. I beg the chauffeur to drive slowly. It would take but a little to make me swear that I have heart disease and that a speed of more than five miles an hour would be likely to make me die in his cab, and that would place him in a fine position!

I have scarcely had time to arrange my evening clothes with the proper decency when we arrive. It is only a quarter past eleven. I am about to ask the chauffeur to take me to the Civette, where I can supply myself with tobacco and cigarettes.

"That fellow must be drunk!" confides the good man to an attendant who has come up to take my baggage. The taxicab is rumbling, just ready to start again. I am getting a headache. While the carriage leaps and jolts, long and lovely verses of Edgar Allan Poe harmonize rhythmically with the beating which I feel on my forehead:

"And the raven, never flitting,
Still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door.
And his eyes have all the seeming
Of a demon that is dreaming
As the lamplight o'er him streaming
Throws his shadow on the floor.
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on
the floor
Shall be lifted—Nevermore."

In thus reciting Poe's verses, I interpolate others and even invent a few. Poor Poe is highly recommended to people like me. His poetry, with its angelic intoxication, calms my uneasy hours, whereas the most melancholy

verses of De Musset only make me laugh when I am in good-humor. At all events, I am sure that three Furies are awaiting me. I should prefer not to encounter one named Annabel Lee, or some other name immortalized by Poe. Meanwhile, Joseph appears.

"What did Madame say?"

"Madame said nothing."

"Very good. You think you have everything necessary!"

"I hope so, Monsieur. Shall I get Monsieur's ticket—er—tickets?"

"Thank you. I don't know where I am going. Queer, isn't it? But it's quite true." A moment of silence ensued.

"You may go, Joseph. The devil! Your bridge game!"

"Madame Jaserin's chauffeur has taken my place. He plays poorly, but he has good luck." A new silence, which I timidly break anew.

"So it's like that? And Madame said nothing? Nothing at all?"

"Why, she didn't even wake up. Monsieur—what must I tell her tomorrow?"

"Are you sure she will ask you anything?"

"I don't think so. But in case she . . ."

"In case she—well, Joseph, you must not tell her in any fashion that I have been called out of town by telephone to some parent's dying bed. Look me right in the eye, old fellow, for I shall speak sincerely. You must tell her—you must tell her . . ." I tried to find as exact an expression as possible.

"I follow Monsieur's orders," declared Joseph, decently punctuating my silence by placing his hand on his heart.

"You will tell her: 'Monsieur came to seek me last night in such a state that his chauffeur thought he was drunk. I don't know where he is nor for how long a time he will be absent, but I am sure he is going to do a lot of absurd things.'"

"I thank Monsieur very much for confiding in me," said Joseph, imperturbably, "and I promise to take care of the affair properly. I shall try to use a trifle more respect than you have employed . . ."

The brute! And no chance to answer him as he deserves, for here comes Nannie. Joseph has disappeared as if by enchantment and as if he knew that she was arriving. In fact, Nannie is a rather poor copy of Annie. A rather poor copy, unless . . .

"Well, what are you dreaming of? You might recognize me! We have things to talk over, and very seriously. You know very well there is no chance to do that at Paris. Come! Let us jump in some train or other."

"What train?"

"Any train—no matter what!"

"There is an express for Auvergne in an hour."

"But that's crazy. Look at me."

Truly! She has not bothered herself in the least to pack a bag. She has even kept on the dress she wore during the "strict intimacy," and here she comes, making an abrupt gesture—what a gesture! For she throws aside her coat and reveals a décolleté which by no means hides her charms. She is less insane than she might seem. It is true that, in such a dress, she has no need of going to Auvergne to incur an accusation against the proprieties.

"I have with me," she says, "my powder, rouge, cream and tooth-brush. A brand-new tooth-brush, monsieur! With such a supply one can travel quite a few miles. But, by all the saints, hurry up and decide. Quick! Some train! We don't need to go very far."

It seems to me that people are beginning to notice us. Heroic measures are necessary. I frown, take Nannie vigorously by the arm, lead her out of the place, and throw to the nearest chauffeur my valise, which my free hand has ingloriously borne.

"Where is he going to take us?"

"Oh! Pardon me. What do you say to the Gare de l'Est?"

"Oh, what must you think of me," murmured Nannie, during the trip. "And where are you taking me?"

"If one only took the trouble to look at a timetable one wouldn't bother himself about trains leaving," muttered the chauffeur at the entrance of the station, as he very slowly gave me my change. Happily, there was a suburban train

leaving soon after midnight. In my confusion, I remembered, nevertheless, a little hotel on the bank of the Marne where long ago with my young girl friends of the Latin Quarter or of Montmartre I . . . And some people claim that these companions of our student days are not sometimes useful during their existence!

"Where are you taking me?" continued Nannie, in a despairing voice.

"To a forsaken island. Calm yourself. I have a bottle of poison in my pocket and I will drink it first."

"Be serious!"

"I am, and it is just on account of that fact that your questions seem superfluous."

"Do you really love me?"

"If you knew what I am sacrificing for you, you would not need to ask that."

"Do you think me pretty? I have had so many shocks this evening that my face must be—a very poor little face."

"There is something for your face." And I gave her such a kiss as a Don Juan would not venture to give his companion at a country dance.

"Oh, how beautifully you can kiss!" declared Nannie, between two sighs.

"I do have that ability. And you haven't seen—but pardon me. Here we are. And the train stops only a moment."

An antiquated victoria bounced us from the station to the hotel. Thieves in automobiles and other scoundrels sought by the police have hidden in that hotel, as I shall learn later. The Germans nearly landed there. Since those days, when one knocks at the door at a late hour, a gun-barrel is poked through a window and a feminine voice demands, "Who is there?"

Such is our present reception. "I shall die of fright," declares Nannie.

"Who is there? We have no vacant rooms!" And the driver has gone! Nannie is almost ready to throw herself into the Marne. However, things begin to be arranged as soon as I mention my name. Better still, since I used to

be a good patron of the house, the owner's grandmother herself insists on getting up to receive us and gossip for a moment.

"Really you? The idea! So long since you have been here! I said to my grandson, only a day or two ago, 'They all come back when they get married!' I have known your husband for nearly ten years, Madame, yes, I myself! Oh, he has had some great escapades! There's nothing mean about him, but he's lively as a bag of fleas."

She bestows a malicious smile on me, which, but for its moustache, is somewhat like the smile created by Houdon on the bust of Voltaire, and then her talk takes another turn, for she understands things. "Madame would like to go to her room?"

Madame agrees enthusiastically.

"I am not so stupid as I look," continues the good old woman, when Madame has left us. "Whenever one of my former acquaintances makes me a wedding visit—and few fail to do it—I always talk to their wives as I did tonight to yours. You may believe what you like, but I have noticed a hundred times that the wives feel kindly towards me—very kindly—and some of them even come to thank me next day!"

Next morning, when an exasperating concert of birds, too familiar and too near my window, has roused me at dawn, Nannie weeps as sincerely, as childishly, and with as little regard for her appearance, attitude and face as if I were up. And I was waking with such a new and eager soul! For—this is no falsehood, Nannie—the delight of your kisses was not far from evoking in my mind and heart some such sentiment as that one vaguely called love.

A sparrow, a male bird with black head, came almost insolently to stare me out of countenance with his round and evil eye, as he stood on the ledge of the still open window. The Marne rustled reassuringly like the boiling of a country priest's kettle. Nannie's sobs require no explanation. They are like those sublime, or stupid, pictures for which a legend would be out of place. They are no more explicable than would be the dream of a musician

guilty of composing a romance without words. I have therefore only to remain silent and wait until my companion speaks.

With resignation, I try to assume various fanciful situations and among them (since I am already lying down) I try to imagine the thoughts which the grave inspires in its pensive occupant. Just right! Let my eyes stay half closed. How sweet! With a little imagination, to Nannie's accompaniment of weeping, I could easily tell myself that only yesterday I was alive and that the girl I loved is now chanting my requiem. Alas! This is the way that Nannie decides to chant my requiem, as soon as she becomes aware that her sobs will not cause me to break my silence:

"First of all, you are going away. I am so disgusted with myself that you do not even displease me. Of course you can kiss well, but so can every man when the woman is poorly married. Your small talent hardly excuses me. Forget me. In two words, Gabrielle is the one who really loves you. Poor dear! What rage and suffering she has had! For years you have hung about her without the least tender word or the smallest audacious action for her. Her patience is marvelous. And she is pretty enough to feel that she is desirable. Your attitude has finally appeared odious and incomprehensible to her. But she is so good! When she was telling me of her sorrow, two weeks ago, she said, 'No, no, we mustn't hold it against him, for he is idiotic, ill or mad.' So I proposed to try myself, just to see how you felt. She is my best friend. One should never hesitate to render a service, any service, to such a charming creature as Gabrielle is. She accepted my suggestion with enthusiasm. Only—only—what would she say if she knew how far I have carried matters!"

"Do you regret it?"

"Yes—no. Oh, go away. Until now I have been an honest woman, if not wholly to my husband, at least so in my friends' eyes. And now . . ." Fresh sobs. Such remorse in a guilty woman is rare, indeed. It must be respected.

I dress myself without reply. I am moved, in spite of

myself. With the manner of a convict, politely assumed for the occasion, I close and lock my heavy valise. I will leave it here. Some amiable words are necessary, though, before I start, so I try a few.

"Nannie, you have the loveliest soul I have ever known. Pardon me for having made you suffer. I did not wish to. Shall we meet again?"

She replies, bitterly, "Why ask that? For people in our position one time more or less—but go away, for pity's sake! Go away, if you want me to remember you!"

Below stairs, the good grandmother, risen early, dear old thing, greets me with a charmed and roguish air.

"Some folks know what talking means, but I know what talking does! You have slept very poorly, last night. Bravo! As I tell my grandson, to sleep poorly at our house is the very best thing for its good reputation, at least when husband and wife sleep poorly there. Too bad, isn't it, that you are not living on your income and that you have to go back early to Paris! Never mind! Tonight. I won't carry your wife's breakfast up until late. I'll look after her. Your nice little wife must be allowed to rest a bit."

VI

When I reach home—jaded, yellow, dressed too quickly, weary from the brief journey and loaded down with my valise which, after all, I had taken at the last moment, a carriage happening to pass when, I say, I arrived at home, I encountered this sort of a situation:

"Monsieur's lady cousin" (it is Joseph speaking) "came here very early. Madame woke up and dressed herself in six quick movements. I didn't see her go away, but Monsieur's cousin and Madame must have met . . ."

"Where did you admit my—cousin?"

"In the salon. She asked me to fetch the newspapers. When I came back, Madame was gone. But the other lady—Monsieur's cousin—said, very sweetly, 'What a nice little thing!' And I said that Madame was very nice indeed, and the quietest person in the world. Monsieur's cousin, though,

did not seem very easy. Something seemed to bother her. She could not be still, she broke a statuette, and threw the papers so near the fire that they caught, and have scorched the carpet a little. At ten o'clock she told me to tell you, if you came in, that she had some errand to do, but that she would soon come back. That was three-quarters of an hour ago. Luckily, Monsieur has come back . . ."

My worthy old servant, who is so glad at my return, and who evidently fears that all has not been very well, is as odious to me as that other simple creature—my old Marne hostess—who thought, on the other hand, that all had happened beautifully!

What has happened is rapidly becoming a burlesque, and I am sure to meet with a very piquant situation very soon. For the lady who Joseph thought was my cousin was of course Gabrielle, as any one could see. Yes, that very Gabrielle, who left a week ago for a journey, and who, having need of the thousand things which all insecure souls have need of, named her desire "need of rest," thus straining both consciousness and unconsciousness, as people do who tell lies to themselves. The bell gave a long peal, followed by two other briefer peals, a rather feverish way of announcing a visitor.

"Monsieur is at home, isn't he—to Madame—or to his cousin?"

"Yes, yes. Hurry!"

It was true! What could be expected? It was better to have it over. I was so sleepy! And yet, even though you should appear unjust or odious, Gabrielle, the very best caress for my eyes, what a welcome I could still accord you!

Joseph arrives like a whirlwind, though, scandalized, or perhaps terrified.

"What's the matter? What has happened?"

Gribouille, when he took his famous bath, must have appeared somewhat like Joseph did as he replied precipitately:

"What has happened—Monsieur's cousin has told me to tell him that she is undressing. She entered your chamber like one who has a right to. And the bed isn't even made!"

I could not be better off were I far away from everything, in a spot which I prefer, and stretched out on the grass near a stream so clear that it would seem the sky, tangible, but fresher than the real sky. The time? Daylight does not exist for us and midnight must be very far away. We shall soon really wake up. Has she been asleep? Her eyes are half open, but like eyes which wish to see nothing. Now I know that I prefer her love to her friendship. Nannie, I shall never be able to pay my debt to you, even though my prolonged blindness concerning her who lies here may cause me lifelong remorse. You were right. I wish that you would come, weary of your long day spent in the little hotel by the river, to knock also at my door. I would say to you, "I was mad! I was living in the light of Gabrielle's brown eyes, in the perfume odorously reflected from her flesh, a perfume which nobody else possesses. I have often playfully kept her hands prisoner for a few seconds, and was aware of no special change in life when I let them go. Yet now I know that my life and happiness are in her and contained in her supple and slender person as in a perfumed silken sachet, in which the most egoistic of all royal children might keep the only jewels seeming to him as beautiful as himself! Ah! If you were guilty of treason, Nannie, how fertile was your treason in miracles!

"Do you know now whom I love, Gaby?"

She does not move and her half-open eyes do not even reflect the dim light of the shaded lamp. The dawn insinuates between the curtains a gleam as pitiful as that shining from a little coin held out to a pair of beggars. Vexed with both things, I close my eyes and cease speaking. Gabrielle and I—it suddenly seems to me that we shall not dare to look at each other when daylight fully comes. Is the dream finished? Is life to begin all over again?

"I love you, Gaby! Can you feel everything I would express by that poor, wornout word? I love you. I have never said so to any one else in that way. I love you. Do you hear me?"

"Thank you, thank you."

She uses the same tone which, doubtless, criminals con-

demned to death would use, had they sufficient manners, to thank those bringing them cigarettes just before their last moment. Gabrielle finally bursts into tears. She too! I had foreseen it, in fact, and my state of mind had been nearly the same as that of people who become afraid of thunder when the sky lowers with heavy clouds impatient to release the lightning. I foresaw that—and preferred it.

My mind is made up. I intended to love Gabrielle if the best “I love you” which I had ever pronounced in my life had sounded favorably in a heart which believed itself full of me and which was as empty as my own. I shall not love Gabrielle, then; but that fact will not prevent me from suffering if I am pleased to find, tomorrow, a certain charm in grief of this kind. Come! I have no such special reason to complain! It is much worse that she also should be mistaken.

“Thank you,” she is murmuring. “I have waited for this moment so long! My hope has been one of those children who are badly spoiled and who can never sufficiently satisfy their mother. Nothing less than a miracle—a miracle . . .”

She is almost intoxicated with weeping and cannot reason very clearly. There is nothing to reply. I will profit by the charm which such a moment must have, even for a modest heart. I will wait—be silent—remain amid this dear warmth as in a field within some well loved place which I prefer, my eyes closed, my nose buried in lovely curls, as odorous as grass in summer time. It seems to me that women who please me physically smell very good when they weep.

“A message,” announces Joseph, knocking at the door.

“Ah! A message. Come in.”

Gabrielle starts. She hides herself in the bed clothing as Joseph, his eyes fixed on the ceiling, brings me a special on which I recognize Annie’s handwriting, which dances as she does. What does it mean? Doubtless an ill-timed jest. For Annie must have suspected something. In fact, since she and Gabrielle met only yesterday at my house, what could there be astonishing? Had they exchanged words and perhaps arranged some plot?

"What is it?" asked Gabrielle.

"Wait at least until I can open the envelope."

I unfold the paper with calculated slowness, for Gabrielle, but half awake, manifests a childish curiosity which is intense and ready for anything. Women scarcely recover their power of dissembling until later and toward the end of the morning, after prolonged arrangement and study of their faces before the mirror.

"My friend, whether one loves a toy or not, one always breaks the toy by playing with it. When you read these lines, your little Annie whom you did not love but who loved you with all her heart will have taken leave of this world, without regret and without sadness. Be sure not to hurry to my room. You will be at least six hours too late. Dispense with any remorse. It is not the fault of those considered intelligent if they fail to see clearly into the hearts of men or women about them; they have sufficient difficulty to see clearly into their own hearts, and have a right to be pitied."

"Oh, my God!" cries Gabrielle, who has read the letter over my shoulder and who would also read into my heart. I drop the paper and pass my hand across my forehead to wipe away the cold, wet wing of this terrible nightmare.

"My dear," sobs Gabrielle, "what are you thinking of? Perhaps there is still time, just the same. Get up! Run!"

"It is not possible—not possible! Annie!"

"Dress yourself! No matter how!"

I am very quick. But Gabrielle, at the very moment when I am about to start—oh, woman's logic!—calls me back in an imperious, passionate voice.

"Kiss me! You remember what I said to you last night? 'Nothing less than a miracle——' Well, it is frightful, it's horrible, but I believe the miracle has happened." What a kiss she gave me!

I arrive at Annie's, continually asking myself whether I am alive or if I am dreaming. The imbecile of a concierge talks of rain, and fine weather, all the time, on the stair! Have I my key? Yes. Oh, my God, may she still be lovely!

Now, I find Annie sitting in her dining room before a cup of chocolate, engaged in buttering a roll. She does not make fun of me stupidly or angrily. When she speaks, she smiles with so much melancholy that I might be even less moved had I found her dead.

"It is nice of you to come," she says. "Do you know, there is at least one true and sincere phrase in my letter? Yes, I am, and want always to be, 'your little Annie, whom you did not love but who loved you with all her heart.' I have not been displeased with that. So, before going, I wanted to do something nice to thank you. You just admit that she—your—your cousin—must love you indeed, after the arrival of my message! Suppose you sit down! Share my breakfast. You won't have a chance to do it again for some time, for I wasn't lying when I said I was about to quit this world, for I am leaving the old world for the new. I have a wonderful engagement at New York. Here, look—why do you look like that? We shall meet again, later. Come, now, I will serve you. You must be very hungry!"

Tears come into my eyes as I eat, with an appetite which is nevertheless an excellent one. "Annie! Suppose I should go with you, over yonder!"

"I know you! You would hate me in a week. I have the best of you and I will keep it. I tell you, you will realize it later. We must all age a little, like good wine."

Later! How softly those two syllables sound! With what joy do I gather them, with a kiss, from the lips of my dear friend!

"*Au revoir*, Annie!"

"*Au revoir*! Try to be already married to Gabrielle when I shall come back to France! And take special care not to cut yourself—I am dead, am I? Really dead—that will be decidedly better, especially because I intend to change my name, play in disguise in the future, and try to get thin."

"You are an angel."

"But if you deceive either of us, your wife or me, with that scamp of a Nannie—look out!"

"She is the cause of all my happiness, Annie. I shall

owe her the favor, if she claims it, of deceiving you both at least a little!"

"Rough rider!"

"No. Be sorry for me."

I am to marry Gabrielle. She assures me that she adores the country, like every one else who cannot live without Paris. I shall choose a villa beside the Marne, near the spot where Nannie, yesterday morning, promised to remember me "on condition that I depart." Perhaps she will return again some day, by chance or seeming as by chance, to the little hotel where we loved each other rather too badly to permit our experience to be a final one. If that happens I shall surely meet her, because my wife Gabrielle will go every day to Paris on some disquieting pretext, and of course that will make me lonely.

The grandmother at the little hotel will think I am divorced and remarried, and that I remember the hotel with longing, a longing which she will fully approve. And at night, while Nannie is returning to Paris, Gabrielle will come back to me from it, groaning, with manifest hypocrisy, "Paris, what a horror it is!"

All will be well provided the two ladies do not meet, some fine day.

What is to become of Annie in all this?

Thank kindly fortune, who has taken such care to adorn my life, that she has left a place in it for the unforeseen and the uncertain.

DEATH

By PIERRE DOMINIQUE

(From *Demain*)

A PART from eighteen months spent at a small college, Paolo and Marco Uccelli had spent all their days in the narrow compass of a little Corsican town that clung to its rock after the manner of a goat. Bonifacio, clustered round its three churches, is entirely surrounded by battlements; and to this day, when you enter it, you must pass over the ancient drawbridge that trembles under the weight of automobiles. The houses are of Genoese origin and type and have preserved their fortified features, so that nearly all these great granite cubes have the appearance of mediæval fortresses. Half the streets in the place are so steep and narrow that no vehicles can use them; which never puts the good people of Bonifacio about very much, for, during the last thousand years or so, they have used no other means of conveyance than the back of a donkey when they are on land, and the deck of their vessels when they are at sea. Staircases lead into courts joined together by covered passages, and the topmost houses, perched on the rock, intensify the effect of that gaunt structure, undermined by the sea.

At this time, some fifty years ago, to get into the town you had to pass through *la Marine*, right down by the battlemented wall, and thence, by unending stairways, climb up to the upper town, your baggage swaying to and fro on the backs of small donkeys that, in the intervals between such labors, wandered peacefully through the town like errant dogs.

Above this group of houses stuck on the sea-mined rock, almost hanging over the waters, there floats a whole array of memories, of war and rebellion, of blood and violent death; like some very ancient frescoes whose colors, as they fade, men retouch with vivid paint.

All around the town, the countryside is as bare and barren as can be. Just opposite the township, in the bottleneck of the peninsula, there stretches out a vast plateau of clay; that is the Campo Romanello, where some long-forgotten king of Aragon once planted his batteries. An hour's march further, the soil is white and seamed with abrupt ravines in the depths of which thin streamlets of water trickle fitfully. Broad dykes of flat stones run round the various lands, describing round the stone-roofed huts what look like gigantic geometrical figures. And beyond that is a desert of granite, of cork-tree forest, a land of malarial fever.

At the time when our story opens, the town was wrapped in this silence and solitude. Separated from Sardinia by the sea, and from the rest of Corsica by these stretches of land void of human habitation and almost empty of fauna, Bonifacio was a citadel, a pirates' nest, a convent of imperious monks ever violating their vows; it was also the aerie of a tribe, proud of its history and its origins, with morals and manners, customs and speech of its own, standing on its bare rock like some scraggy, untamed animal with muscles ever ready, fit for action.

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The two young men were in the early twenties when a certain Santina happened across their path, a maid who in social rank was far indeed below that of the Uccelli, and whose father, Don Cosimo Volterra, had waxed rich out of smuggling business with Sardinia; in short, a maid one may love and play with, but hardly marry.

To judge from the way she carried herself, and from the lustful swing of her walk, she was probably eager for some passionate adventure. She reminded one of a gypsy, with untamed eye lighting up an impassive face; so her passion smouldered in the cover of a seemingly well ordered life.

All night long mandolins wailed and sang below her window. So the first task of the Uccelli, aided by the gentle persuasion of a gun, was to see that the mandolins kept away and the nights of their fancied dame were freed

from such disturbing noises. The means were simple enough: firstly a request to be silent; secondly, to cheek up to the other gallants; thirdly, at the least show of reluctance to depart, to bark out three or four times with the gun. One day this last did spoil permanently the voice of the finest singer of Bonifacio: a fool this was, named Volpe, whose name, meaning fox, gave a much too flattering idea of his intelligence; he got the bullet square in the throat, but by some chance did not die of it. That very night he was carried up to Porto-Vecchio, where four of his relatives, armed to the teeth, mounted permanent guard over his room. The reason for this was an overheard remark from Paolo to his brother that, since they had put a bullet through Volpe's throat, the most politic thing to do would be to put a second bullet through his heart, so as to avoid any future unpleasantness with him. However, Volpe sued for peace, presented abject apologies and swore never to set foot in Bonifacio again. After which the street where dwelt Santina was strangely quiet.

Santina herself was quite grateful to the two brothers for having shed blood on her behalf. Some one told her the marksman had been Marco; this she steadily refused to credit, for the very sound reason that it was Paolo, not Marco, who owned house, title and fortune.

Santina was one of those women who play with sentiment as one does with a house dog; very friendly, but only an animal after all. Her impulse was towards Marco, but she had an eye on the material future. Marco was the handsomer, livelier and cleverer of the two brothers; he wrote verse and when, after the forcible clearing of all rivals from the street, the two Uccellis set to filling with sweet music Santina's sleeping hours, he it was who sang out the love songs, the while Paolo, gun in hand, stood silently by, or contented himself with scratching away at his mandolin.

Elder or younger . . . which? That was the question, and, *per Bacco*, no easy question to settle. Her debates on the subject started at dawn and went on far in the night, till wakened up again by the serenades. As for the father, Don Cosimo Volterra, he had a very definite vision of

Santina as Signora Uccelli. Beyond that, his vision did not extend. But, what he did see, he repeated constantly, regularly, like the plying of an axe.

Many a time, in the half light of their room, she had confessed to her father that it was Marco she loved.

"Yes," the old man would say, "but is he willing? And . . . suppose the elder were willing . . . what then?"

He was in a quandary and his business instincts led him to tackle Marco. His reasoning proceeded on the following lines: "By taking the younger, who is not wealthy and has neither the ancestral home nor the title, I make an offering to the Goddess of Luck, and I cover myself in the eyes of the world. The affair will bring in less cash but be a good deal surer of success."

To Marco he said: "I possess a warehouse with five hundred thousand francs' worth of goods in it, also a cork-tree forest of two thousand hectares. That is the main thing. I also have some further trifles, but nothing in the bank. If you want her, my daughter is yours. She is rich enough for two, and nothing is too good for an Uccelli."

And Marco accepted.

On the morrow, however, without taking notice of his younger brother's engagement, Paolo declared to Don Cosimo that he intended to marry Santina.

The old man said to his daughter: "Better make your choice."

"My choice is made," she replied. "I take the elder."

Ambition triumphed in her. The father marveled and was worried. The thing was too good to be true, he reflected. But there was no need for him to make excuses to Marco, for since Santina had intimated her decision Marco had been seen no more. However, two days later, some one set fire of a night to a heap of cork piled against the wall of his warehouse, and the old man lost the lot.

The merchant cried his desolation so loud that Paolo Uccelli spoke sharply to him. "Don't insult me by thinking this disturbs me," he said. "I will take Santina without a stitch, if it pleases you. And for yourself, Don Cosimo, you have plenty left."

A fortnight before the wedding, Cosimo's cork-tree

forest went ablaze. Two thousand hectares of cork trees, a trifle over indeed, some hundred thousand square feet over; an annual revenue of fifty thousand francs, taking one year with another. Don Cosimo went nearly mad. He ran to the blazing stretch, and ran back again, his hair and eyebrows half singed away. The inquiry yielded nothing: people had been seen setting fire to the place, and fanning the flames; but that was all, and anyway, the inquiry was very slack.

Paolo said: "If my foe wanted to force me to marry Santina, he could not take a better way of doing it."

As for the author of these crimes, he had an ace card to play: killing the elder Uccelli. The attempt was made. By whom? Was it Marco? God alone knows. For it might have been the old Sardinian himself, or even the girl. Such a death would have put everything right again. Santina would have been able to reconcile love with ambition; Don Cosimo would in all likelihood have been duly compensated for his losses and Marco would have attained his wish to marry.

All that was known was that, one evening, the girl saw Paolo enter rapidly, looking rather funny, though dignified as ever. He wore a sort of bandage that covered his nose, chin and ears; and from beneath this barricade of linen, he was muttering violent oaths.

As he was coming in at the door, he heard a noise of some one scurrying away. He thought he recognized his brother, but merely frowned, and showed Santina his wound. A pistol shot had broken his teeth and perforated both his cheeks.

Santina broke out into loud lamentations, whereupon he asked, more by gestures than by words, that she should remain silent and recover the dignity that was befitting to so beautiful a woman.

But he did take some steps. He had himself guarded by some men he could reckon on, and he hurried on the wedding, which the archpriest duly celebrated with great pomp at the church of Saint John the Baptist. Marco did not attend the ceremony.

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Paolo's first care, the day after the wedding, was to forbid Santina to leave the house. His second was to get a big gate erected, with a door in it, which made all access to his wife's apartments impossible to unauthorized persons.

The Uccelli's ancestral home was a very ancient affair, with the outside walls quite naked and unadorned, but with highly ornate ceilings, crammed with old furniture and bad portraits of obscure ancestors. The windows were naturally furnished with bars. So the newly wed girl could nurse the illusion of being literally imprisoned by her husband, who, be it said, was violently in love with her. There were large adjoining rooms where she could while away her boredom; these occupied the whole of the third and fourth stories of a house built right on the highest point of the rock, which means that they were incessantly beaten by every wind that blew. On the one side, one had a view over the street, redolent with filth of every description, alive with dogs and donkeys and women dressed in black or in every color of the rainbow. On the other side, the view offered the sentry's way around the ramparts, with, beyond it, the harbor, spreading itself canal-like about sixty yards below.

Santina did not go out but she received many visits from envious acquaintances. Priests and monks intervened, alleging the duty of a good Catholic to go to Mass. Paolo met that point by offering his house as a suitable church, his wife and himself to be the entire congregation. When that did not quite solve the difficulty, he settled the matter by presenting them with a golden elephant some ancient ancestor of his had brought back from India.

Don Cosimo was, of course, ruined, and Marco kept him. For the rest, said Marco was gloomily chewing his misfortune. The servants of Santina, unbeknown to Paolo, also gave him food. One day, the old man came to the Uccelli house and Paolo threatened to throw him down the stairs. As for Marco, the door was not even opened for him. In short, it was a closed door for every one.

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One day Santina took a heroic resolve: she would run

away. Her beauty of features was unspoiled but this constant seclusion had made her heavy and stout. She did not take any of the servants into her confidence. She had a strong, self-reliant temper and did not depend on any one except herself, nor on anything, save, dimly, on the certainty she hugged that Marco's love for her burned undiminished.

Her plan was to tie her bed sheets together and thus lower herself onto the sentry path around the ramparts, whence, from time to time, rose the wailing of the younger brother's mandolin. She would take refuge at her father's. Paolo had a country house in the Porto-Vecchio direction, and no doubt she could remain there under the protection of her father, her brother-in-law and some other relatives.

But, since her husband stalked her about from room to room, she had to be very quick about it. Furthermore, she had put on a lot of weight and that was in her way. As she was floating in mid-air, somewhere between the second and third stories, the bed-sheet rope broke or came undone, or perhaps even it was cut from above. Anyway, she fell and, falling, gave a great shout.

All the neighbors ran up to see what was the matter. Paolo was there among the very first and, without moving a muscle, gave the order to have her carried upstairs again. She was clenching her teeth with pain, for both her legs were broken. When they came to the gate, the men who were carrying her gave up their burden to the women of the household.

The local practitioner locked her legs up in two enormous wooden contrivances tied to her haunches by a whole array of straps. It became apparent, however, that the legs would not set straight, so an Italian doctor was fetched from Santa Teresa, on the other side of the straits. This physician had a great reputation and promptly broke both legs again in order to set them aright. Santina had refused her consent to this operation, and when she felt the bone crack, she struck her torturer full in the face. This did not prevent the whole town from being full of talk about the miraculous cure.

In the failure of Santina's attempt, Don Cosimo and Marco had seen the finger of God, a sign that he was ill disposed towards them. On the old Sardinian this had a stupefying effect; it made Marco blaspheme and plunge into evil living. When the Santa Teresa doctor came to see his patient, Don Cosimo sent word to ask him to come and visit him, since he was unable to move out of the house. The doctor made no secret of the fact that the daughter was in a very bad way and that he feared complications in the region of the lungs; he added that she was making matters worse by refusing all food and not allowing plasters to be put on, as the treatment required.

The doctor noticed a somber-looking figure at Don Cosimo's bedside. It was Marco Uccelli, his elbow resting on the wooden back of the bed. At first he stood quite still. Then, when he had heard the doctor's words, he swore on the Christ that this was the vilest scandal ever heard of on this earth.

On the evening of the next day, old Don Cosimo got them to carry him as far as the Uccelli house. Many people assembled round his stretcher, so when he arrived in front of the latticed door he was accompanied by a crowd of several hundred people, pressing and squeezing in the narrow street. One man went on before, climbed the steps and said, with considerable ceremony, standing in front of the gate: "Don Cosimo requests the Lord Paolo to be good enough to receive him."

Paolo, his cheeks sunk in, came down, had a look at the envoy and growled. The priest, who, with one or two other old men, had joined the party, added his plea: "It would be a charitable act."

Paolo tapped his gun: "Sir Priest," said he, "if Don Cosimo ventures up here, this is what will receive him."

They could hear Santina's voice: "O, Paolo, Paolo dear, have mercy! Let Father come up . . . I am going to die. . . . do let him up. . . . Oh, if I could only walk! Is there then no God? What does this God do? You brute! Murderer!"

Then, suddenly, her fine voice was hushed behind the door, which Paolo had slammed to.

Either God was deaf, or He was on the side of the elder Uccelli.

From that day on, Paolo forbade all visits. Not a soul ever saw Santina after that, save the servants, and the old Sardinian died without seeing his daughter again.

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A week later, the local physician went to the Uccelli house and found the mistress of the house thin, with wax-like complexion, her eyes obstinately fixed on a bit of blue sky peeping through the window. She did not address a single word to him. As he was screwing up the contrivance in which her legs were inclosed, a clot of blood choked up one of her arteries and she died.

So Santina came down the stairs at last, to the ringing of the bells, and the street full with the whole population of the place; and the four monastic orders of Bonifacio, in full apparel, all assembled together to do honor to the house of Uccelli, as was befitting.

She left her husband's house thus, feet first, fully stretched out in her wooden bed, to go to church, which she had not done for over two years.

From the church she was borne to the chapel of the Uccelli, which, as every one knows, stands on the Pian di Capelle, the other side of the harbor, between two verdant oak trees. It is a romantic chapel, from which one gets a view of ten miles around the countryside—just the place for a woman who, for so long, had seen nothing but the breadth of a narrow vennel.

Marco was in the funeral procession, muttering all manner of mad things, that Paolo had killed his wife. But people had always thought the younger Uccelli was a trifle mad; and, after all, as is well known, a wife is her husband's chattel, for him to do as he likes with.

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Having seen Santina duly locked up in the little chapel vault, Paolo returned home and, when all his relatives had departed, he padlocked the gateway, locked himself in three

communicating rooms and started walking up and down the length of all three of them to while away the time. He smoked pipe after pipe, swallowed down a glass of water from time to time and alternately muttered a monologue and read some very old Italian books that dealt with love and war. He never read newspapers; his own time, he deemed unworthy.

The servant who attended on his wants said that Paolo read the entire library through, every book of it, row by row, from right to left; when he had finished them, he started again in the same order. He let his beard grow and did not receive any one.

This kind of mourning was not unusual and people thought this instance a particularly edifying one, and not in any way odd. It furnished a topic for local conversation for a week or so and then people found something else to talk about.

In due time it came to pass that in Bonifacio no child of five, and then none of ten, years of age had ever caught so much as a glimpse of the face of Paolo Uccelli.

Marco wandered all day long, too, but not in a room; on *la Marine*, among sailormen whose almost African heads were squarely planted on vigorous brown shoulders. He loved to see the arrival of the sailing boats, the turmoil of the markets; to hear the cries of the fisherfolk bearing great baskets full of fish or sea-urchins; to feel the nearness of the shepherds from the hill, smelling of sheep, of the sailor drawing his sodden net, of the merchant of Phœnician type, with full cheeks and curved nose, olive skin and lively eyes.

He felt good in this environment, and his youth came streaming back to him, lighting up his face and his eyes, giving liveliness to his movements, occasionally even expressing itself in quasi-buffoon speeches. These were bright snatches, and on them followed the night of sorrow—long, sad walks, sometimes alone, sometimes with some familiar friends, hands in his pocket, pipe or cigar between his teeth. Periods of sadness and aimless wanderings these, through dead zones of memory, peopled with images of an imperishable past.

So for days he would stroll along the quays, north and south. And every time he turned northwards, he would incline his head towards the left and gaze at the little chapel where Santina lay sleeping between the two oak trees.

People knew they could address him at these times, but he would reply only after he had finished his silent contemplation and turned round again. His eyes, drawing in their wake all the roughness of his vindictive spirit, were fixed on that little white spot lost between the green and the blue. And the man steeped himself at such times in a bath of old love or old hatred. These be powerful foods for such souls as his.

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One fine day in May, as he was walking in and out among the creels full of fish and shells, the justice of the peace, who ranked among his friends, screwed himself up to the pitch of saying to him:

"By the way, Marco, do you know that, last night, about eleven, your brother was singing a love song, accompanying himself on the mandolin?"

These words hit him as a knife stab. He stopped in his walk and looked at the justice:

"You're mad, Antoine."

"Well, I heard it with my own ears."

"You were drunk, Antoine."

"With my own ears, I tell you," and he pulled at his ears violently to show they were there all right. As Marco laughed incredulously, the justice lifted his hand as if taking the oath in his court and, with a sudden rise in his voice, swore on the head of his children: "May they lose their eyesight if I speak not the truth. May they be carried into the graveyard."

So, that morning, Marco left *la Marine* earlier than his wont and went up to the Uccelli house.

Since his return from France, he had not come nearer than three hundred yards from it, quite a long distance in so small and cased-in a town. At the mere sight of him there, the whole street came in uproar and the good wives

assembled, scenting possible tragedy. A host of urchins followed close on his heels and maidens held trembling hands to their bosoms.

"Oh me, what's going to be now? They will surely kill each other . . ."

He did not even notice them. The door groaned as if in astonishment and he started up the stone staircase of forty huge straight steps, made for men with inordinately long legs. Arrived at the inside gate, he muttered incoherent words and shook it violently. A servant ran up, hands lifted to Heaven, wide-eyed. He swore at her:

"Open up."

"But . . . Lord Marco . . . I dare not . . . it is forbidden . . ."

He was as if glued to the door.

"Blood of the Saints . . . are you going to open or shall I blow the lock up with my pistol?"

He laid his hand on his gun. The old woman was trembling with fright, but she had a great fund of prudence.

"All right, but without arms," she said.

With a gesture of contempt, Marco flung his gun behind him in the staircase.

"Are you content now?"

"Come in, Lord Marco."

He entered, squaring his shoulders, mouth open as if ready to take a bite out of any foe. Standing in front of the door, he listened.

One could hear Paolo's voice, raucous like an old man's but throbbing with the ardor of love. He had never dared let Santina hear that voice of his. He was singing a love song. And the words were just such words as Marco himself had used once, clinging words, like arms that clasp or lips that kiss. . . .

The younger brother called out: "Paolo!"

The voice stopped. Marco broke the silence:

"You are very gay . . ."

"Why not?" retorted he who was locked in.

Paolo said, in soft tones: "Don't be afraid, Santina . . ." A subtle perfume came from under the door, and a rustle as of a woman's dress was heard.

In rougher tones, Paolo started again:

"What do you seek here, in my house?"

"Fool!"

"Come, Marco, don't play the bad brother. I am busy with my wife. I want nothing from you. Leave us alone."

"Santina? She is up there in the chapel . . ."

And Marco had a short, bitter laugh, an odd mixture of pleasure and pain.

"All right," the answer came, "go and visit her there . . ."

And there was the sound as of a double laugh. The younger man felt a retort on the tip of his tongue, but he clenched his teeth.

All that afternoon, Marco haunted every café of the town and *la Marine*, telling everybody that Paolo had lost his senses and, in evidence, relating his story. Towards evening, there was a hoarse tone in his voice. And when night came, he went wandering about in the neighborhood of the chapel.

He got into the way of making the threshold of the chapel his abode. For hours he would remain there, gazing down on the distant harbor, or, further still, on the white horses on the sea. Vague noises rose in confused murmurs, also smells. . . . One heard a crackling as of a tree the wind is stripping bare.

At times, exhausted, he would lie stretched out on the grass, and his lips would wander over the cool earth as over a living body. One evening, he asked his brother for the key of the chapel and this was thrown to him out of the window. It was the only time people caught a glimpse of Paolo at all, and then only his arm.

That evening, Marco went up and sat beside the tomb, dreaming. He muttered, and vaguely wondered why it was that that dear voice did not answer his. He wept. The chapel was a fairly new chapel that held just the father, the mother, one buried above the other, and Santina.

The beloved one was alone in her corner. . . . Oh, to open the door and fill his nostrils with that cold smell of damp plaster. . . . To think that behind that slab of marble there rests . . . who? Santina?

Every day now, on *la Marine*, he spoke about exhuming the body, seeking for the stupid reasons from a brain barren of ideas.

And every evening he wandered round the Uccelli house, that was now filled with song and laughter and the sound of the mandolin.

One evening, Paolo shouted to him:

"Go, thou thief of women, go up to the Uccelli chapel and take Giacomo the simpleton with you, and a couple of picks and shovels, and you'll have bad luck if you don't dig up some princess out of the ground . . ."

In a milder, almost smiling tone, he added:

"Is it not true, Santina mine? That fool of a Marco will find a princess, won't he?"

Then, louder again:

"Hurry! Thou thief of women, hurry! Some one might run away with her . . ."

"I will kill you, pig that you are . . ." yelled Marco.

But, when night was there, with Giacomo, they opened the door, lit a lamp and placed it on the altar, unsealed the tomb, dragged the coffin out and shed the light on a poor, hideous, decomposed thing that the grave digger recognized. Bareheaded, standing before the body, he said: "The Signora Santina . . ." And started crying.

But Marco shook his head: "It is not true, it is not true," he shouted. "Do you hear? I won't have it . . ."

And, arms twisted, his face convulsed, he rolled on to the earth, shouting to the stars the name of his well beloved. Then he clapped on the lid of the coffin and, furiously, with kicks and blows with the shovel, he pushed the horror away from him, sealing, closing up, as if for all eternity, shouting the while:

"It is not true . . . it is not she . . ."

The incident caused people in the town to say that he was mad. Had he not been an Uccelli, justice would have intervened. But, in this part of the country, justice has to reckon with old families and old customs.

Marco took up again his idle dreamer's life. Every evening, when his nervous step sounded on the pavement in front of the Uccelli house, Paolo, from his high observa-

tory by the window, hidden behind the curtain, like some invisible tempter, asked him sneeringly what news he had of Santina. . . .

It was the justice of the peace who saw the last of Marco, a very thin Marco, quite silent. They had a long walk together, and it was very late before they separated at the corner near the church of the Templars. But the younger Uccelli did not return home.

In those days a man possessed of much imagination, who knew the inside of many things and had a peculiar skill in getting people to let drop their most secret and sinister thoughts, related the following:

"Yes, friends, Marco left Antoine, and went where he was wont to go nightly, pacing the street in front of the Uccelli house. There he sighed and thought of Santina, who was not in the vault. That hideous thing could not be Santina . . . Santina was a throbbing, living body, with perfume wafted all around her, dressed in silk and velvet. The voice of the mandolin from the house seemed to warn him: 'She is here . . .'

"Marco listened to the voice of the mandolin and went up. He shook the gate and the old servant opened to him, still wide-eyed and lifting her arms to heaven, muttering timid words. . . .

"Arrived in front of his brother's door, he said: 'Paolo!'

" 'Well?'

"The mandolin had stopped.

" 'Where is Santina?'

" 'Here, *per Madonna*, seated on a chair opposite me. Go away, Marco, you thief!'

"Marco must have gone in, just as he was, by pushing the door open—it was an old door—and probably he imagined he saw Santina. How else can you suppose things happened, my friends?

"He thought he saw her, as she had used to look, and placed himself in front of the vision and said: 'She is mine . . .'

"Paolo must have laughed at this point. You see, this

was the first time the brothers had seen each other for ten years. Then, I suppose, he must have tried to push his younger brother away, and, well, a knife thrust is a thing quickly got.

"I imagine Paolo must have fallen down and rolled there for a moment, the blood streaming out of his arteries; then his clasped hands slackened. Marco looked down upon his handiwork. Oppressed by the sight of the body and all the visions it conjured up, he turned round and imagined he heard loud laughter. . . .

"The whole of that night he spent searching, and the next day, and the days after, for ten long years."

It was a story that made people shrug their shoulders. In the town the prevalent belief was that the younger brother had gone off to America. Through a narrow aperture, the old servant continued bringing the solitary occupant of the room his meals, and he went on reading and eating and walking about. But there were no more songs, and the mandolin was silent.

At times one could hear a furious searching, some one pushing the furniture about, plunging into cupboards, sounding the walls. . . . For a time a pungent smell was noticed about the house, but it wore off.

And, ten years later, as the hermit had for two days not come to the aperture in the door to fetch his food, they burst open the door and found the two dead bodies in the rooms. One was just beginning to putrefy, and the other was completely mummified. But in the glassy dead eyes of both there shone the same frozen dream of love.

AT THE MARIE-MADELEINE HOSPITAL

By PIERRE MACORLAN

(From *Les Cahiers Nouveaux*)

I

AT dawn, on the corner of rue des Saules and rue St. Vincent, a rag-picker who was going through a garbage can was suddenly seized with fright. The man dropped his hook and fled with great speed, raising his knees high as he ran, his mouth wide open. Behind him, without apparent reason, ran an old fox-terrier whose stub tail stuck to his hind legs, and, right after the fox, a rat glided over the ground, it being impossible to notice his legs move. The man, the dog and the rat disappeared in the semi-darkness watched by a lamp-post of which the gas flame burned low behind broken panes of glass. As the gas burned, it played the tune of a kettle singing softly over a slow fire. And I, I shivered with early morning fever under the entrance to a garden which led to the old house, the third and top floor of which I had just rendered mysterious with childish candor.

That was the first sight which attracted my attention when I breathed the fresh air of the street for the first time, the very moment I escaped from a tepid, bloody and cerebral atmosphere.

The early morn bathed the rue St. Vincent in a sort of neutral color in which ingenuous batrachians could have quite easily been mistaken for cameos. I opened tired eyes upon the green and gray street; dissonances rang in my ears, and a rooster crowed like a saxophone at the end of a picturesque fox trot.

I was literally stuck in the shadow of this badly closed door. It seemed to me that I had lost the "forward" lever of my engine. I considered myself to be (at that par-

ticular moment and with quietude) a sort of machine that might be of public interest and was suddenly parked in the corner of a door which might have given access into oblivion.

This hypothesis temporarily consoled me for a number of frightful and stupid occurrences of which I was the creator and which a springtime sun which was ready to rise upon the horizon presented as being the most desirable expression of the following saying: "He who leads a truly pure life has a light and perfumed heart." Images of easily attained happiness immediately became catalogued in my mind. Visions of joyous celebrations appeared upon the screen of a dark wall which I had chosen to develop my film upon. I obtained the proper relief of the pictures by gazing upon any definite point with painful intensity. Two female lips blossomed like a rose of which perfume is to be made. They opened to devour fried potatoes, closed upon a cigarette, became round to make believe a kiss. . . . The mouth opened wide, like the doors of a circus. The tongue appeared from the depths of this black tunnel, as well as a purple flame which licked the face of which I was unable to distinguish the other features. . . . The cabaret lyricism of this popular vision was cut short by this detail. The appearance of the tongue marked the central point of a moving circumference in which wide hips were visible which could have belonged only to a woman, to that Alice Eglantine whom I had just cut into pieces in a small, untidy kitchen which reflected this abnormal scene by the presence of the bottoms of twelve recently shined copper saucepans.

This image which obsessed me to the extent of modifying the rhythm of my steps, together with the presence of the sun which furnished the means of an easy life to all the men around me, caused me once more to use the familiar gestures of my childhood when, to get away from my parents, our home and our mocking servant, I used to take refuge in a favorite corner of mine, like Robinson on his island. I used to get ideas from my brains, just as though I were getting from the depths of a shipwrecked hull an extraordinary collection of objects and foodstuffs,

from a rifle to boxes of canned meat, including the bread and butter trees which bloomed in front of the door of my appetizing dream like the two rosebushes in the garden which belonged to the head-mistress of the Girls' High School. When somehow or other I had thus recalled this corner of my childhood under the cover of this door and when the cold stone of the wall, which touched my shoulders, convinced me that something opaque kept me away from the garden and the dead house, one by one, I calmly, wisely, went over the elements of that night which appeared to me as full of events as a receptacle which is distended by the pressure of its contents.

I can still conceive myself as I was when I entered Alice's rooms. I had a soul, as one might say, and, to express a comparison, it was the soul of a pre-war man. When I left that third floor, which had become as sonorous as a church, leaving behind my defenseless back the bloodless body of a twenty-eight-year-old woman, I was another man, a man with an after-the-war soul. On this October morning, towards four o'clock, I was able to define these two conditions of my personality fairly well. There remained but to define a "no man's land" between these two conditions: a period during which I had killed and for one hour and a half had accomplished such masterly carving that it took from me any opinion I might have had concerning the importance of my homicidal act. I had cut up this human body (which, it must be admitted, had lost all of its charm) without in any way worrying about danger, just like a machine-gunner standing by his gun and so worried to death by technical details that he does not notice the approaching attack with the lucidity of an infantryman who has but to look out for his life during the engagement. I had methodically cut this five-feet-six-and-one-half-inch woman into pieces on the kitchen table; the blood poured down into two or three receptacles which had been properly disposed for the purpose; I heard the noise made by liquid, which continually caused me to raise my head towards the kitchen water tap, which I had opened so that both noises should sound like one. In the room next door, which was Alice's bedroom, a phonograph record of "Swa-

nee River" still lay upon the machine, between the girl's hat, her gloves, a small clock and a pack of cigarettes which were half-dipped in an overturned glass of port wine. The odor of a lilac tree floated through the partly opened window. The busy little clock was accomplishing its duty and its pink galalith dial did not show the hour of the crime: a celestial hour at which all the springtime flowers, excited by the night, dispatch their hymns toward houses just as choir boys release clouds of incense. I remembered all these delicate details quite well and the gestures which I accomplished in the kitchen where, on the gas range, a small quantity of washing which included bodices and silk stockings was ready to take off the stove, and which meanwhile exasperated me without my knowing it. During the two hours which I spent on this frightful adventure, I was as nervous as a cat's skin and the glance of my eyes upon my two hands, which served me like two faithful animals, scalded me as much as the edge of a fire which one might have carelessly grazed.

A sort of ecstasy, very near religious exaltation, dominated me and made my cheeks become red with fever.

My one concern was to time my last criminal attentions to the henceforth unrecognizable body of my victim, with the last word of this *leit-motiv* which coincided perfectly with the kick I gave to a bundle of soiled linen to push it under the whitewood cupboard. It was at that light and perfumed instant, the very moment I opened the door of the apartment to flee, or, to be more exact, to get away from that atmosphere which I had created, that I noticed with great fear that my personality, which thus far had been an ærial one, condensed itself into something as heavy as lead. I could not make up my mind to leave that kitchen and the body of my victim. It seemed to me that I would be safe as long as I remained near her, in the midst of the hundred odds and ends and ornaments which she had chosen. Traditional reminiscences advised me to flee. By gathering all my energy, I was able to close the door. I crawled along the corridor like a larva. When I reached the garden, I experienced a violent desire to turn back because the alley was so unobstructed that it

might have been a trap. But then, I would have had to go through the corridor again before once more returning into the little kitchen where I was awaited by the protecting body of the girl I had killed.

When I was able to see the street, public property indeed, for a moment I thought it brought me mercy for my sins. Sluggish as I was, I had the time to reconstitute, one by one, the essential minutes of which I had been the master. And now, with the first rays of the Maytime sun shining over Montmartre and my head, fright entered my body like water into a torpedoed ship.

II

Although by nature I am not extravagant, I did not hesitate to call a taxi. I gave some sort of address to the driver, for, from then on, I considered myself to be a plain, ordinary murderer. I watched the early morning Paris (which I was not very well acquainted with) go by. I saw houses fleeing, like in German films; houses which kept astride of one another as they fled, in front of hunch-backed lamp-posts; houses the doors of which opened like the lids of violin-cases. I saw police workers, stenographers belonging to the police department, policemen, bank employees belonging to the police force, and some police officers' little girls who were going to school with their legs bare, which very view irritated me by the mere association of ideas. This first taxi stopped, at my request, in front of the Trocadero. I paid without being too stingy about the tip and I let the car go as I watched some blackbirds on a lawn. There were twenty blackbirds there: police birds, without a doubt. I took advantage of this fact to call another cab, the color of which was green and yellow, and I drove to where I live, Boulevard du Montparnasse, at the end of a yard where, most fortunately, the flowers spare me their insolence. I instructed the driver to stop before we reached my house, for I did not want my janitor to become impressed with a compromising fact in seeing me get out of the cab. Upon entering the room in which I keep my books, I experienced a sen-

sation, or more exactly a perversion, of the eyesight which I had felt once before upon my return from the war; my books seemed to have become smaller than they were usually, more especially so in the case of all those that were bound.

I took the precaution of locking the door behind me and I lay down on the divan, taking good care not to open the shutters. At that instant, I was already defenseless, in the hands of justice, of the executioner and all his beastly accessories. I experienced no difficulty in considering myself as a commonplace murderer, caught in the noose—a man who had killed without profit to himself, for individual or collective murder nearly always remains profitless. I formulated useless prayers which all tended to implore Heaven. I asked but for this one day of respite, so that I might get used to the picture of death by decapitation and calm my nerves which were still vibrating in the atmosphere of the red kitchen. Lying face downwards with my head buried in the protecting darkness of the cushions, my thoughts tramped up to the extreme limits of despair.

With my fists digging into my eyes, I re-created the classical and romantic picture of the guillotine. That popular silhouette was unable to plunge me into that redeeming kind of horror which I sought for as being the purest quality of my punishment. An awful fear of the justice of men, which I could not succeed in picturing, seized me with such violence that I was obliged to arise and to pace up and down my rooms in order to try to calm myself by exercising. I soon returned to my previous position on the divan, for I felt the extreme urgency of this meditation.

Through a sequence of association of ideas and pictures which I had found in the daily papers, my punishment shaped itself into something like an admissible form, if one takes into consideration the savage form of my crime, together with the scientific times in which we are living. I saw myself stripped to the belt, at early dawn, at the very hour I killed Alice Eglantine, with my shoulders the same color as "old ivory" and my head sanctified by

the enlargement of my eyes. Opposite me was a pillar made of light iron, a spurt of steel which supported an antenna to which were attached three wires which were stretched down to the ground like guitar strings. Death hid behind this mysterious simplicity. And my hypotheses drifted without result towards combinations which my scientific culture was unable to solve. Turning around, I caught sight of a microphone which was to broadcast my last cry to all loud-speakers within a radius of one thousand kilometers. In spite of my efforts, I was unable to extend this vision any further; I was not even able to constrain it to appear once more upon the black screen, circled with violet and golden halos, which I had obtained by stopping up my eyes with my fists.

After having drunk a glass of fresh water, the value of which I appreciated, for soon I shall drink no more fresh water, I sat in an armchair behind the entrance to my apartment and, with my ear nearly stuck to the lock, I listened, holding my breath and with a parched mouth, to all the noises made in the house which seemed to be coming towards my staircase or, in fact, which might concern me. Thus I heard the occupant of the second floor play infinitely touching tunes on his accordion, popular tunes which give value to life and which I could have heard many times again for years if . . . Gradually the scene of the murder became humanized and tears ran down my cheeks in a fit of despair which it is impossible to describe. Footsteps on the staircase caused me to straighten up. All my blood rushed to my hands. I turned my head around and in the mirror of the clothes-hanger I saw my face, which was as pale, as white, as inhuman, as that of a clown. The adventure did not cease in front of my door and, little by little, my blood returned to its former positions. I remained in the same attitude for over an hour, following the rhythm of all the noises I heard with nods of my head. The fact that I was becoming stupefied awakened me from this torpitude.

For an instant, I forgot my crime and quite naturally I commenced to act just as though my life were untouched, that is, approximately identical to that of all the inhabitants of my house. I therefore began to put away my washing

which the laundress had brought back on the previous day and which I had left in a bundle on my bed. I was counting the shirts, with my laundry-book in my hand, when the uselessness of this job became obvious to me. My hands started to tremble and my feverish cheeks caught fire so as to make me suffer. I was under the impression of having shaved close to the skin with a blunt razor-blade. I touched my cheek with my finger and spread out a drop of blood. I looked at myself in the mirror and the glass revealed small, nearly invisible spots of blood on my chin and at the angles of my jaws. Immediately I dipped my head in a basin of cold water and carefully rubbed my face with a shaving stick. This operation calmed me. At the time, I even experienced such a feeling of physical relief that suddenly I felt tempted to take my hat and go out. I put my hat on, but as soon as I touched the lock on the door my body once more became like lead and I was unable to overcome the secret difficulty which slipped between the door and my will-power. With my hat on my head I went to the only one of my windows which overlooked the boulevard. The upper part of the shutters being opened, all I had to do to let the sun into my room was to pull back the curtains. I felt, in front of that closed window, that my lead body would not allow me to open it. However, I was able to glance down at the boulevard. It appeared to me as a world in which I no longer participated and which was terribly temporary. I was under the impression that the large six-story buildings were built of papier-mâché; the tramcars seemed to be but children's toys made of painted tin; the trees bloomed like roughly painted trees made of wooden shavings; and the people in the street seemed to be so light, at least according to the estimation of my eyes, that I compared them to corpses that had been revived for a few hours for a reason which I did not even seek to go into. In spite of this vision of ancient humanity, I was not losing my senses. I watched the boulevard and looked for the groups of police officers, who, from one minute to the next, were to arrest me.

They might have been coming from two different direc-

tions. Yet I suspected that their intrusion into my house and my heart was going to be unexpected, one which would be absolutely outside of all my conjectures. I was very nearly as delighted at this conception of danger as I would have been of a very good joke. I already felt myself to be weak and cowardly in the face of the almightiness of these men. I extended my hands towards the handcuffs and already bent my back under the insults of the crowd.

Somebody walked in the corridor and I remained flattened against the wall like a field-mouse caught in the rays of a pocket flashlight in a cellar. It was a false alarm. I turned my head around slowly, very slowly, towards the window and behind the window-pane I saw the somewhat stupid-looking face of Alice Eglantine: a pretty face, if one likes, at any rate an ex-sanguineous face with large, dead eyes, with paler lips than those of German girls, a face which, with as much wickedness as possible, revealed indisputable signs of *rigor mortis*.

I was but able to open my mouth in the face of this vision which I should have expected. Automatically I passed my hand over my cheeks. Once more I felt that all the hairs of my hard and badly shaved beard pricked my skin like sparks of fire. Looking at my hand, I saw that the end of my forefinger was pink from having had a tiny drop of blood spread over it.

III

I lived through that day one second at a time. I decomposed it and analyzed its fragments with an amount of feeling which I did not think I possessed. Jacob Yourovski, who killed the Czar of Russia with a revolver, and all those who enter into similar combinations of which human life is the stake are well acquainted (either before or after performing the deed) with that extraordinary functioning of their entire nervous system. I greeted the appearance of the city street lights that evening with the enthusiasm of the athlete who catches sight of a stadium. It was towards that time that I again became clear-headed.

This fact coincided with the disappearance of fear (temporarily at least) for I felt, I don't know why, that I should not be arrested at night. At early dawn? At early dawn, maybe, a knock at my door, a heavy shoe bumping against the wall of the corridor, a few oaths would awaken me so as to give me a foretaste of my last day of life, that traditional day which is described by poets who do not realize how irritating their lyricism can be to a man who is fatally drawn towards such a solution. I had reached a period of my life which was similar to the one I went through during the war. I lived through every thirty minutes merely for the amount of relief, rest and divine prostration which they contained. Until dawn, I was going to be able to roll over in my bed, the softness of which already stroked my skin. With my hands stretched behind my neck, I could already imagine a well disciplined dream, which would carry me far from the house on rue des Saules, with its abominable roses, its denouncing carnations and the six fundamental pieces of Alice Eglantine's body, which, now, with all the strength of my desire to live, honestly, normally, like the least important passer-by, I would have liked to rebuild and revive. Having killed this woman, I had gotten rid of all my dangerous impurities; I had, without my realizing it, acted ingenuously, like those degenerated farmhands who think they can cure themselves of venereal disease by raping a child and transmitting their incomprehensible illness to her. I indeed thought that by killing Alice I became the victim of a similar presumption, but I never would have dared to admit it to a judge, even if he were a jovial one. Life is full of such small prudery which prevents us from playing the game with our true faces. The fear of being ridiculed decorates a murderer like wax cherries grace the hat of a certain janitor mentioned in one of Goncourt's books. If one should ask the worst possible criminal why he killed that little girl who was so poor, so miserable in her death dress, he would reply, with shame on his forehead: "For reasons, your Honor, which it would not be proper to explain in court."

This momentary confidence or, to express myself more

correctly, this resurrection which came to me with the approaching night, suddenly made me become like a famished animal. I went to my cupboard, in which I was fortunate enough to discover bread, wine, ham, eggs and jam. Luck was coming my way. I did not, however, take this fact too seriously, for I knew that at dawn all this fine respite would come to an end when the rooster crowed and that I would then once more, as helpless as ever, have to face the spirit of evil with my old body which was so heavy that it could not follow the flight of the witches over the still slumbering towns and countrysides.

I was able to make myself an omelette, without paying any attention to outside noises; and, if I did not hum as I stepped on my kitchen floor, it was merely in official memory of Alice and of all this drama which tomorrow's newspapers would solemnize in irreparable sentences. I managed to feed myself by chewing my bread properly. I drank all the wine that the bottle contained so as to organize a turbulent, superficial stage setting, a groggy atmosphere in which everything sounds wrong, in which ideas whizz around with tremendous speed and in which everything is created, moves and disappears, without any importance whatsoever.

I made the rounds of my dwelling although my head somewhat weighed upon my shoulders and my feet felt awkward. I inspected the lock of the door, the gas tap, and a small closet which was full of old clothes, which, when the light was out and from a distance, could become endowed with secret and terrifying life. Having taken these precautions, I went to bed. I tried to read. The things I did on the previous night called for reading which was favorable to meditation.

"I shall," thought I, "prepare myself for death very sensibly and intellectually, following the example of a number of those who profess great disgust for life or of certain cautious philosophers." Immediately the image of Montaigne presented itself to my mind. Too many events separated us, and besides, that man had not murdered anybody. His intervention did not console me.

Well wrapped up in my sheets, I was thinking of death:

my supreme consolation, indeed, would have been to die another death than the one which was to be mine on account of my behavior. During a few quarters of an hour, I envied the death of apoplectics, which, on account of its coloring, always resembles an advertisement for a barroom; the death of consumptives, who die at the very moment when their entire energy flames up in an imaginary resurrection; the death of soldiers, who depart from this world under the anæsthetic of stupefaction; the death of old men, who perhaps are the only ones who can calmly take advantage of the centuries-old documents that were written upon this obligation which agrees to such a small extent with the tastes of humanity. I could have committed suicide. Evidently. But the idea of committing suicide did not come to me during my night of waiting. One cannot think of everything and the trail of my thoughts plainly led me far away from that road.

After having attempted to elevate my faculties to a metaphysical domain, I found myself obliged—because of a limited vocabulary—to abandon myself to the frenzied fancies which my exasperated sensibility accumulated all around me: in the wood of the furniture which cracked maliciously, in the obscure closet where old clothes seemed to be in conspiracy, and also in the vicinity of the front door where I seemed to overhear too many furtive sounds. The fear that I too in turn might be assassinated held me stark and livid. My beard and the hair of my head were rigid and painful as I lay there on my pillow with my eyes riveted to the space between the half-open door of my bed-chamber which gave onto the vestibule of the house. I must have fallen asleep in this attitude of watchfulness. As far as I was able to judge, my sleep was not of that quality which reposes the entire body molecule by molecule. I was never able to determine exactly the form of the nightmare which finally woke me with a soft little cry of a child. But this cry, nevertheless, woke me. I was sweating all over. An oily, hot moisture bathed my face, the middle of my back and my arms and hands. I took my handkerchief and wiped off my face in the utter obscurity.

It was at this time that I turned the button of the electric-light extension placed at the head of the bed. I turned the button repeatedly without being able to understand that in my sad circumstances I was the victim of a short-circuit affecting the entire neighborhood.

This annoying perspiration induced by mortal terror did not cease its cunning infiltration. In order to sponge myself off I was obliged to take everything I could lay my hands upon: the pillow-cases, which I slipped off in the darkness; my shirt, my drawers, the top of my pajamas, a superb scarf in green cloth, my cap and all the handkerchiefs I could find by spreading my hands all around me like some crafty and prudent animal seeking his prey with dangerous stealth.

When I had dried myself nicely I at once felt the good effect of this action which added itself to my profound fatigue. It was then that I fell off to sleep again.

Upon awaking it was broad day. With the coming of daylight my terror took rapid possession of me again. The double curtains in front of the window let in only a mere ray of light like some Rembrandt painting. My whole body seemed as if crushed and I moved about in my bed painfully. My motions lifted to me a very faint, warm, fetid odor. I felt about the covers and sensed that my bed was literally soaked. I must have perspired during the entire early hours of the morning—those same hours at which time I had murdered and cut up the body of Alice Eglantine.

I was able to gather together enough strength to get up and fling back the double curtains. This movement caused me to place my hands in full daylight: they were all red. I fell back towards the bed and caught sight of my face in the mirror: it too was red. I then turned to look at my couch: everything was blood-stained—the bed, my shirt, my hat, my pants, my pajamas, my pillow-cases and all the handkerchiefs scattered about the room. I sensed that I was gradually losing the power of my limbs and instinctively I held my hands out in front of me.

IV

My nose struck the wooden frame of the bed violently. This accident, together with the good, healthy nose-bleed which resulted, saved me from a fit of fainting which, from one mystery to another, might have resulted in my death. I was obliged to spend fully fifteen minutes watching the blood drip into the wash basin drop by drop like water oozing from a faulty faucet. I was in a state of acute prostration. Finally this hemorrhage ceased but I found that I had accepted it very calmly. I refrained from concentrating my thoughts too intensely in order not to cause a congestion of the small veins of the brain which are so very fragile at certain times. When the normal functioning of my brain was almost resumed I stretched myself out on the bed, propping up my head with two pillows and refusing to take the trouble to do away with the blood-stained linen which made my room look very much like a Jewish slaughter-house.

As one can imagine, the memory of the murder of Alice Eglantine and the infamous rôle I had played in that tragedy had completely effaced itself from my mind. I found a certain delight in that sort of weak, lamentable condition known to little children who have cut themselves and who are pitied. I let my head sag on my shoulder in such an attitude of self-pity that it was not long before my eyes were filled with consoling tears. A very curious emotional freak of the imagination so heightened the effect of this sickroom of mine that it came very near modifying my sentiments. I must have been under the effect of a sort of celestial inertia or trance wherein some nurses (suggestive of some neat little war) surrounded I know not who or what very much after the fashion of angels damned by the carnal insinuation of their transparent silk stockings. My left arm was hanging over the edge of the bed and the weight of the hand which it supported became so great that I could not refrain from looking at it. Naturally it was of a violet hue—congested and as horrible as the sight of some naked drunkard. It resembled an apoplectic octopus. Tiny little red spots appeared on the skin. Once again I was sweating blood. This fact gave

me enough strength to jump up and brutally extinguish the paradisiacal music-hall whose sentimental airs I could hear played by a soprano-saxophone which joined together all the accessories of a beautiful catholic sky intermingled with other accessories on whose nature it is best not to insist.

It was at this instant that for the first time I felt my heart change its rhythm and begin beating, without any previous preparation, at the average speed of all the various things which comprise daily existence. Up until that time I had lived in the midst of sensations which had increased daily until they had reached the limits of my corporal resistance which was endowed with a Louis XV nervous system, or, if you prefer, that of a man whose every act is governed by a single means of locomotion—that of a carriage drawn by horses. That is to say that between me and a Roman bourgeois—contemporary of Caligula—and another Bourgeois of the days of the Directory there was no difference whatever in the machinery destined by Nature to utilize my sensitiveness. With this faster rhythm which my heart imposed on the blood circulation of my arteries I was ready to believe that I had invented a model 1924 nervous system. It was not long before I realized instinctively that I had been greatly mistaken.

At present my heart was snorting like a magneto. An extraordinary animation vibrated in my veins. I was seized with such a sense of dread that my under jaw began trembling and I formed the sign of the cross above my breast and forehead. I felt death approaching at terrifying speed. I could feel it taking possession of me in a gyratory motion which would certainly not delay blasting me to pieces and scattering my atoms into the revolving cosmos and its freakish manifestations which cannot be imagined even by those who—in spite of the warning sign-post—have dared go beyond the limits permitted. As I was horribly frightened I opened the window which gave onto the courtyard and called for Rose—my janitress—a very fine little woman who had been the housemaid of an Argentine diplomat. Her husband ran the car belonging to the owner of the building, a car of I don't know exactly what horse-power.

I had won the good graces of this young person by my politeness and my respectful manner when addressing her. However, one night when I had intoxicated myself at the Dome with some friends of the neighborhood, I had attempted to kiss her on the lips while in the corridor leading to entrance C and I had uttered disgusting proposals. This adventure of little consequence afforded her many hypotheses as to the secret qualities of my soul. She had compared the result of these hypotheses with my usual daily respectability and a little mystery of uncertainty had been born in the mind of this pleasing person who was as intelligent as a caged dove and who concerned herself only with trifling duties.

"Rose!" I called in a hoarse voice from the window. The small grating of the office was thrown open and Rose's head—her hair dressed in Parisian-doll fashion—appeared to view, curiously ruffled.

"Did you call me, Mr. Nicholas?"

"Yes," I articulated weakly, "come right upstairs. I am very ill."

Ordinarily I always accompanied this remark with the comparison—"sick as a cow." But this time I contented myself with closing the window while suppressing a groan.

Before long Rose reached my room. She caught sight of the bloody rags and appeared to be very much upset. At this moment my famous evil genius suggested to me to say: "Rose, I have just murdered a woman." I found the strength however to overcome this idiotic obsession.

"Goodness gracious!" cried Rose, "you have spattered blood over everything. Have you cut yourself?" Her glance took in the whole room with its stained handkerchiefs and pillow-cases.

"I have had a nose-bleed," I explained, "but I am very badly off. I am afraid now that I am going to have an apoplectic stroke. I can't understand my condition at all. Please be kind enough to find a doctor and bring him here. I have the sensation that I am going to die."

"Lie down, Mr. Nicholas. Dr. Merry who lives right next door has just come in. I noticed his car in front of the house. I will notify him."

Fifteen minutes later I heard the sound of voices on the stairway. Rose had left my door ajar. She entered, preceding Dr. Merry, who already smelt the stale and so characteristic odor of human blood.

Upon entering my room he could not prevent himself from exclaiming with surprise: "Well, I declare! Have you lost all that blood? You have certainly lost as much as three men bled white and you still as red as . . ." He found no suitable comparison and, mechanically, he took hold of my wrist. The condition of my pulse impressed him, no doubt, as presenting a scientific novelty, for he suddenly gazed fixedly into my eyes with such a terrified glance that it almost caused me to grit my teeth.

"I am going to have you transferred to the Marie-Madeleine Hospital . . . but in the meanwhile we are going to bleed you a little."

He took out a lancet and punctured me in the arm and at the lobe of the ear. Meanwhile Rose went to the telephone and pleaded in an agonizing tone of voice—for I could still hear confusedly everything that was going on in the office—for an ambulance to be dispatched immediately.

The operation performed by Dr. Merry relieved me at once. To thank him I was on the point of confiding:

"Doctor, do you know that I have just murdered a woman?"

"Idiot!" I exclaimed aloud.

Dr. Merry turned around and looked at me curiously.

"I am calling myself an idiot, Doctor. Indeed I am one!"

"Repose yourself a bit," he replied, scratching his chin, "the ambulance will be here very shortly."

He was standing next to the window, which he had opened upon his arrival, and was listening attentively to the various street sounds. Thus it was that we heard:

(a) The long shriek of a factory siren in child-labor like the Queen Lilith or a bourgeois woman of pre-historic ages.

(b) The cheerful clatter of half a company of the Guards on horseback.

(c) The buzzing of a fly.

(d) The crying of an infant blue with rage.

(e) The gossip of forty-year-old shrews discussing scurrilous stories.

(f) The shrill clanging of the ambulance wagon.

I put on my hat. Dr. Merry tied a handkerchief around my forehead where already glowed a few small drops of blood. With lowered head I descended the stairs. A nurse was waiting for me in the ambulance.

"Lie down at full length," she directed.

Dr. Merry seated himself next to her in the car with its lowered curtains.

The conventional security resulting from the doctor's presence gently led my thoughts back to the beautiful garden in the rue des Saules which led—through an alley bordered by hyacinths—to the corpse of Alice Eglantine which I had sought to render anonymous.

"Let me see the newspapers!" I bellowed, struggling about on my litter.

"It's a fine time to ask for newspapers!" responded Dr. Merry.

V

My admittance to the hospital was a practically clandestine affair. They conducted me alongside of brooding buildings which seemed to be all windows and doors as some fish appear to be all mouth and eyes. Nurses were waiting for me in a vestibule with whitewashed walls. Because of their sensual gaiety and easy-going ways they resembled the dancing-girls of some ballet. A dancing-master, clad in white as they were, made his way to me through their flexible attitudes, or, to be more exact, towards Dr. Merry. Curiosity—like some rose-colored serpent—wrapped itself gracefully around my body. This sensation intimidated me and I found myself suddenly hampered in my movements while at the same time a betraying smile clearly designated me—at least it seemed so to me—as a trembling, loquacious criminal or a tattered human mass for having, early in the morning, swept out in less than two hours' time the accumulated filth of a

prostitute's chamber along with the street and the heavens.

The interne on duty listened to Dr. Merry's monologue. Now and then he would look at me with a shake of his head. I overheard such words as: "It's impossible! Extraordinary!" The word "case" was frequently pronounced, accompanied by glances which did not exclude me from the conversation.

This confab annoyed me and I sensed that my heart was beginning to throb like a pump. My arteries began swelling like pipes under heavy pressure. My head foolishly began filling with some dense liquid and a loud ringing in my ears announced that my entire system of circulation was quite frankly beginning its work of reproduction. A red haze altered the color of my hands, which I held out in front of me as far as I could from the rest of my body as if they had been two bombs ready to explode.

Then came a flutter of white skirts and gauze veils. I was pushed into a white cell—a sort of bathroom minus the tub but furnished with a chair and a bed, all in white.

An experienced girl undressed me, wrapped me in a nightgown with large, coarse bone buttons and pushed me firmly towards the bed where she drew aside the sheets to make room for my legs which were moving awkwardly about in an effort to conceal themselves from this woman's gaze.

They bled me again and I took advantage of the slight relief which this operation procured to let myself descend once again into the black pit—the fetid well in which the limbs of Alice Eglantine began to move about, endowed with a sort of existence which animated each one of them separately.

As the hours slowly passed between spells of blood-sweating, I became greatly astonished that they had not yet arrested me. The more I thought of my awful crime the more was I led to realize that I had bungled things as badly as some child. I also imagined that they would find extenuating circumstances because of such ingenuity in the accomplishment of a crime which, psychologically, appeared in the light of mere perversity, which had been inoffensive up until now and which had earned for me

throughout the world only a fine reputation of being a naughty but rather complex youth.

My case—according to my way of thinking—came more under the head of literature than criminology. I would have liked to be judged by some tribunal such as the Goncourt Academy, for example. To have been sentenced to death by the Goncourt Academy or, less severely, to hard labor for life, would—had it not actually delighted me—at least have reconciled me with the machinery of human justice whose mechanism I did not appreciate, doubtlessly for lack of erudition in such matters.

I asked for the newspapers at the same time as some nourishment and a lemonade. A nurse, smelling of chloride and tightly laced in a blouse of white cloth, brought me some eggs, milk and a newspaper. I eagerly scanned the four pages. My crime had been discovered a few hours after my departure from the house of guilt. The article did not enlighten me very much however. Indeed it consisted only of a few complementary items which doubtlessly completed the main story which had been published the previous day. Although I was absolutely dominated by the desire to know everything, I managed to remain quiet enough not to attract the attention of the staff to the articles that interested me and I did not insist upon having further news. I ate my food with relish, and with the first symptoms of digestion I felt that I was filling up with blood in an abnormal way. My hands began to ooze blood. Within a quarter of an hour I became a dreadful mass of human flesh, terrified in my clinging bandages of bloody linen. I rang the alarm bell with the result that my room was invaded by people of both sexes garbed in white and who gesticulated and rushed madly about my bed.

This did not result in my death, but, according to what my nurse said, I was unconscious for two hours. When I came to I was lying on a sort of soft couch made of red rubber and whose color in itself was not aggressive in its relation to the color of my blood.

This marked the beginning of a strange and monstrous existence of which I was the ridiculous, sentimental and interesting hero.

My bedside became the meeting place of the élite of doctors, biologists and all the other fairly numerous professions which could invent some reason for interesting themselves in a thirty-seven-year-old murderer lying helplessly on a rubber mattress and producing—for his own personal use—about twenty-five times as much blood as any other man in the world.

Stretched out on my back and fastened down by straps in that position already rendered celebrated by Damiens, I listened to the conversation of scientists and dwelt upon what my fate would be. I was incapable of believing in the possibility of divine chastisement. It seemed scarcely possible to me that for having killed Alice Eglantine I should be transformed into a sort of blood-producing machine or some powerful, hard-working mechanism destined to fill its functions until the day ordained for the simultaneous breaking-up of all the cog-wheels animated by the monstrous pump of my heart which kept in endless circulation, and for no earthly reason at all, the inexhaustible production of a chemical laboratory such as no human body had ever before concealed. I was perfectly aware of my stretched-out form. I pictured myself—swollen as I was out of all proportion, bloated and ungainly, with my mouth and lips parched and burning—as resembling one of those strange factories of astonishing dimensions which I had once seen in photographs representing Soviet Russia and the new style of its factories of fantastic simplicity and their cement cellars.

In my actual condition and already a prisoner for seven days, I resembled—because of my swollen body—the outline of some factory in relief. I was surrounded by pipes which gave me the false appearance of an obscene Japanese drawing. Through these pipes of red rubber the blood which I endlessly produced was drained off into vases fully as impressive as gas-meters. For it was a fact—and all the scientists had been obliged to acknowledge it—that I endlessly produced new blood very much like some war-plant manufacturing munitions. My heart kept on pounding like some huge piston-rod, driving my blood through my arteries and from them—thanks to an ingenious surgi-

cal device—into the red-painted receptacles. Everything that I drank and ate was transformed into blood with absolutely no by-product. I was bloated with blood like some huge and repulsive blood-sucking animal. A nurse attended to the machine and literally stuffed the edibles into my mouth. The astonishment of all the people collected around my bed to witness the strange spectacle drew electric sparks from the roots of my irritated hair. They did not seek to question me, for I was incapable of suggesting a worthy scientific explanation as to the origin of my phenomenal condition. I could perceive in the eyes of those who were observing me and of the nurse who brought me my food the uneasiness caused by a mysterious sense of horror and also a profound desire to be preserved from this disease which was probably the result of an instant of intense cerebral emotion engendered by all the various hypotheses concerning my final chastisement.

Now that I had formed my own opinion as to my actual situation which was, for me, nothing less than an excess of humiliation, I interested myself no further as to the social evolution of humanity—a problem, which, for purely egoistical reasons, had so tormented me when I had been a normal being. During the abominable hours of consciousness which I utilized in producing fresh blood I was able to find some slight consolation in the thought that my case was almost of a divine nature. This realization placed me far above the rest of humanity, like some easily interpreted symbol that everybody could comprehend. This detail alone set me apart from five-legged sheep, calf-headed children and from all the pigmy human monstrosities whose personalities do not go beyond the dimensions of a glass bowl filled with alcohol. I did not exactly inspire hilarity. The hospital that sheltered me shone in the night like a moonstone. Thousands of eyes blazing with curiosity sought at every hour of the day and night to gain entrance to the semi-industrial, semi-mortuary spherical vault in which I endlessly continued manufacturing that crimson elixir whose social value was beginning to rise throughout Europe and thus reward the discreet efforts of all those who are cautious of their existence. It was at this time

that I began writing this report. I should have liked to grace it with a few figures but the men who were guarding me left me in ignorance as to the quantity of blood I was capable of producing each day. I was even unable to estimate the amount from the number of large cans that surrounded me as they were replaced by empty ones during my sleep.

VI

My blood production increased every day. At first the doctors imagined that the abundant supply of food with which the administration favored me was responsible for this increase in production. They placed me on a strict diet and they were rather surprised to note that the flow of blood from my veins did not diminish one liter. As for me, I had noticed that since the day when I had resolved to write down my impressions my heart had not only continued but had actually increased the speed of its action. I felt in a state of happy prosperity from an industrial point of view and although the thought never entered my mind as to what use might be made of my blood which was so ingeniously canalized I was filled with that discreet satisfaction of a gentleman who suddenly finds himself on the road to wealth.

This realization however gave me food for thought. An undeniable coincidence existed between the fact that my writing and mental effort had a bearing on the prosperous state of my blood production. My immobility, seclusion and the horror with which I inspired those who served me had infinitely sharpened my analytical faculties. But, specifically, I had become an extremely lucid and intelligent inspector relative to all the things pertaining to the interior of this factory into which my body had been transformed. Like some excellent mechanic I understood the workings of the tiniest cogs of this blood-manufacturing machine. A panel had momentarily separated my body from my intellect. By this time I had wonderfully accommodated myself to my situation. My former personality had become the technical director of my body

which was now definitely liberated from all the traditions that glorify the mortal remains of man in time of peace. It was therefore the director of my trunk and of my arms and legs, which had become as white as the core of a turnip, who was the first person to discover that I produced blood—not only from what I consumed—but also from everything I saw and from all the ideas and mental suggestions which my brain rendered digestible by some fantastic means. It was not long before those about me came to realize this new development. Then it was that I lived some extraordinarily curious hours. The reading of a book made it possible for me to produce about one hundred liters of blood. A picture, drawing or a few films—German ones indeed—quintupled my powers of production. Livid and sneering in appearance and always stretched out at full length on my mattress of red rubber and surrounded by the intestinal tubes which joined my arteries to the monstrous jars that so terrified the whole world, I lived in a peculiar landscape which closely resembled a sort of gas-factory whose meters were coated with whatever red paint happened to be handy. It had been found necessary to enlarge the Marie-Madeleine Hospital by appropriating and demolishing sections of the houses next door. Located in advantageous positions, gigantic barrels with the Eiffel Tower in their depths indicated to the passengers of the auto-cars lined up in front of the hastily constructed enclosure that a young man of thirty-seven had been bleeding continually for three months—filling the barrels, kegs and monumental vats—because, so some affirmed, he had murdered a prostitute, or, as others insinuated, because he had conceived certain delicately spiritual ideals which were in harmony with the general opinions of Christians relative to the spirit of self-sacrifice.

My condition inspired me with no pride and the fact of having attracted the attention of the world left me far sadder than indifferent. As a result of an instant of optimism and having been cheered up by a bright ray of sunlight which had just pierced me with its precious arrow, I had gone so far as to dare to look at myself in a mirror of sufficient size to permit me to judge of the general

effect of my position on the bed. An immense sentiment of disgust had then deprived me of any desire to try this experiment again. I resembled a huge cancer of a form dictated by the whims of Nature within the reglementary confines of the human body. Needless to say, the mere sight of blood nauseated me. I was even incapable of thinking calmly about the color red. I would have sold my precious existence if I could have been blessed with white blood, as fluid as water and without any odor. Just at this stage, by an excessive perversity of fate, the administration decided that white garments were too easily soiled to be worn by the nurses and female attendants attached to my service. They dressed them all in red with a red blouse, red cap, red silk stockings and high-heeled red shoes. They always wore this uniform which gave them the appearance of female inquisitioners in some red-light district. However, one was able to look at them with a sort of sensual satisfaction, so true is it that man accommodates himself to everything.

I concerned myself more and more every day with the eventual apotheosis of this adventure. To be able to produce such a quantity of blood as to fill colossal vats failed to impress me as offering a social function of much importance. A war, which fortunately meant nothing to me except that I was still held prisoner, came along to prove the utter uselessness of blood considered as a conquering force. From a scientific point of view I lacked variety. Furthermore, it was impossible for me to die from loss of blood. It would have been necessary to reach directly the heart, to have torn open my breast in some large square and thus exposed to the populace this astounding organ which I was able to visualize only in the form of an airplane motor.

On certain nights I would think of Alice Eglantine. Her mortuary kitchen seemed to me like some low Eden, and, in spite of the presence of the naked and bloodless remains, this terrible kitchen caused me to dream of little bushes growing along the Marne and the odor of fragrant creepers growing about the Bas Meudon villas. I opened a book by Paul Fort and went straight to the page—as to

some familiar place of meeting—where these lines appeared:

The beautiful eyes of some Clementine
And her two arms lifted at early dawn
Towards each cluster of flowering white-thorn
With the birth of a young and ardent love.

My anguish would then subside. "There now," I exclaimed inwardly with a pronounced Eighteenth-Century feeling, "there now, O unappreciative Youth, is the incarnation of past days. Oh! naughty Alice!—I wanted to say Manon instead—you bring to me not your poor severed head of a martyr with no history, but your gestures, your mouth like some fresh bouquet, your refreshing eyes and your tongue—that exotic fruit hidden in a basket!" The vision of the little dead girl (no doubt because it appeared bloodless) illuminated my heart with a ray of comforting light.

Towards evening, before going to sleep, I lessened the brilliancy of this angelic light and closing my eyes I was able to imagine an image of pure white in which the milk, snow-flakes and rounded thighs of my dear Eglantine engendered a movement of centrifugal force.

During the day, with my eyes wide open, I would whistle this movement to the tune of "Saw Mill River Road."

VII

Finally they decided to exploit me with method. An international company with a stock issue and a list of names temporarily honored in political circles was organized in order to lend a practical significance to what was indeed but a vulgar, symbolic situation. Alongside of the corridors where were stacked the blood-filled vats, offices were modeled in fifteen days' time inside of elegant steel frames which I would have liked to lift to my lips—as women do instinctively when they are presented with some flowers. As early as eight o'clock in the morning I could hear the stenographers saying nice things to each other in the corri-

dors. A bureaucratic activity hid my body in a colorless mist. A special vocabulary was dedicated to me as if it had been a great honor. The product I manufactured was definitely crowned by an official form-letter with the firm's name printed in red and black letters. It read:

THE BLOOD

International company with a stock capitalization of
500,000,000 liters AND AN AUTOMATICALLY YEARLY
INCREASED CAPITAL.

This publicity formula was published in all the papers throughout the world. Literary Reviews gave it space in their advertising sections, printed on red paper. It is these sections one reads with the greatest pleasure. Articles elaborated by the most diverse and celebrated of exegetes commented upon this advertisement in a style that was either lyrical or severely unadorned. Millions of idiots yawned before this revelation and, harassed by an almost unanimous advertising campaign, they conceived the idea while reading their morning paper that a new Messiah—a sort of Christ—had been born; a Messiah who, after having murdered the eternal temptress while under the influence of a spell of mysticism and heroic modesty, had been designated by the Lord to bleed on the cross for the salvation of his brethren, but, on this occasion, in a truly appalling manner.

As the doctors knew quite well that news ideas, even if they were discouragingly foolish, transformed themselves into blood through my ever working organism, they gave me all the papers I desired with the result that I would writhe in fury on my rubber bed like some acrobat on a wire rope after having read these wild accounts.

Nothing could have been more distressing to me than this hypothesis that I was bleeding for the benefit of all humanity with no distinction as to profession, age or sex.

"And so I am bleeding right now," I would wail, "and I am giving all my blood to X., Z. and Y.,—those lowly scoundrels who have spent all their spare time and part of

their working hours bitterly discussing me. . . ." This supposition literally suffocated me. But I was not master of the situation and I endured my martyrdom with a discreet smile for I did not want my features or my words to betray the impotent rage which at certain moments swept through the center of my head like some typhoon.

A statistician who had been blighted by the radiance of poetry wrote in the pamphlet edited by the Society: "THE BLOOD," transformed into an insurance company against war that it would henceforth be useless to transport soldiers to the battlefield to be used for mass manoeuvres. All that would be necessary would be to let me bleed in the open, at some strategic point, in order for the morale to be preserved. The author of the articles mentioned in round figures the amount of blood I was capable of spreading over the ground. This quantity exceeded in an encouraging proportion the amount collectively lost by the armed forces in the last war. I was capable of replacing two nations in mortal combat. In creating me, provident Nature had done away with one of the most subtle and discouraging of evils, which men collectively accepted with great enthusiasm while at the same time trying to save themselves individually by ruse and hypocrisy.

Surrounded by my guard of honor, composed of scarlet nurses, I read without ceasing. Also, I was not able to cope with the directors of the company with the arrogance of some precious product. I became of a teasing and jesting disposition and I made abuse of puns and gibes. Without any impatience I calmly awaited the time when they should lift me onto some specially constructed truck—like some immense animal—and carry me to the center of the latest battlefield selected by all. I had completely lost all notion as to time. My existence alternated between white and black, day and night, which appeared and vanished like some luminous advertisement. At early dawn I would hear the voice of the head-nurse—a small woman with short, blonde hair and a pointed nose like a little trumpet. This youthful person would announce to some spectators I was unable to see: "My pig is going to be moved; my pig will leave here tomorrow; my pig is going

to be housed elsewhere." She would heave a long sigh of relief and rattle her keys joyfully.

Then a brutal, surly voice would specify: "We are going to stuff the Messiah into Charles's car. Talk about a fine loadful! I am to convey him, along with a whole collection of jars to take care of the blood produced on the way . . . I said to the director: 'It's not up to me to do this . . . and besides, my car is in no condition. . . .' But the boss told me to take Charles's car . . . After that I said to him . . ."

A door was then violently closed and I could hear only the familiar sound of blood trickling, drop by drop, into a reservoir that was too empty and placed too near my bed. Lewd images created by the head-nurse moved about in the darkest corner of my room where my crafty eyes had already set up a screen for just this kind of projections.

HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

By PIERRE MILLE

(From *Demain*)

“WELL then, Madame Borge, it would seem that it means war!”

It was Mr. Mouillard, a grocer of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine at the corner of the rue Crozatier, who uttered these words while wrapping up a quarter of a pound of butter and a quarter of a pound of roasted coffee for his client.

The placard announcing the beginning of the war with Germany and the consequent mobilization had just been posted on the doors of all the district town halls and almost everywhere on the city walls. Newsboys were racing madly about. But Madame Borge did not read the newspapers. Indeed, she did not even know how to read.

“War?” she inquired.

This word meant nothing to her, or almost nothing. The upheaval, ruin, horror and death which it implied escaped her comprehension. During all her existence, already quite a long one, her horizon had been limited to very simple, immediate and elementary things. She had no imagination. No schooling whatever had enlarged the very limited field of her ideas. She did very little thinking at all. She thought about only what she actually saw or else when some one spoke to her. The rest of the time her brain contented itself with a sort of confused reverie, cheerful enough, in which she visualized what she had done and what she proposed doing, the small duties to be fulfilled and the simple satisfactions of the household.

After the death of her “old man,” who was a porter at the Gare de Lyon, she had been unable to collect any pension because she had not been legally married, and so she had begun doing household work and washing at the pub-

lic laundry near the Pont Marie for private individuals. Madame Borge had a good, dependable clientele which enabled her to eat and pay for the rent of an office in the rue Nonnains-d'Hyeres. It is a very pleasing quarter of the town where there are but people of modest means and where every one knows one another.

There is also a wine merchant there who has a phonograph and who holds informal dances in the evening. She did not dance; less on account of her age, which had made her portly, than because of her dress which she did not consider as being suitable. This detail had not prevented a young man living in the rue de L'Hotel de Ville and who was a trifle tipsy at the time—some five years ago—from inviting her to accompany him along the lower banks of the Seine. As it had been some time since she had known such satisfaction as this it had seemed most agreeable to her. She recalled to mind the delicious odor coming from the barges anchored along the shore and laden with apples, and the aged poplars which shed their cotton-white flowers like flakes of snow which did not melt and which changed from soft white to delicate blue beneath the glow of a street lamp. The young man had not renewed his attentions and she had not pursued him, not wishing to establish a bad reputation. But she would dream about it at night when all alone.

Madame Borge had a slight accent of the south of France. She repeated:

“War? . . . With the Germans?”

She was aware of the fact that it could be only with the Germans. Her ignorance of things was not so great that she could entertain any doubt as to that. War, for the French, could be only with the Germans.

“Assuredly!” confirmed Mr. Mouillard. “With the miserable Germans! My son is leaving tomorrow. And you, Madame Borge, have you any children?”

“My boy died when he was very young. He was not quite eight years old.”

“In one way it is better so,” said the grocer.

“Yes, it is all for the best. . . .”

She said this because it is always necessary to say as

everybody else does; it is more polite. But she also said it for another reason which had just come to her all of a sudden and which she had never realized before: he would have been a German—her boy! He had been legitimized only by her—and she was a German! She had so utterly forgotten about it. . . .

It had necessitated this unbelievable and impossible thing—the war—in order to bring it all back to her mind as well as her real name, exactly as it was written on the police records: Bortges, which she had allowed the Parisians to change into “Borge” without any difficulty or even wanting it so, merely because it was easier to pronounce. If from behind her in the street they had called her Bortges, she would not even have turned around. Furthermore, she did not know any German. Not one word of it!

Now she was forty-six years old. She was but six when she accompanied her mother, a cook taken into France by her employers, an Italian Consul and his wife, when they had abandoned their post at Cologne for the one at Marseilles. As a little girl she had never spoken anything but French, and that with a provincial accent! The only Teutonic characteristic she had kept (and this to her advantage) was a sort of drawn expression of her face—horse-like in a sense—which German women take on fairly often as they grow old on account of the heavy jaw-bones and the blonde, discolored hair which turns slightly green, miserably, before becoming white. . . .

All this struck her as being very funny and beyond all comprehension. Germany . . . Germany? What indeed could it all mean—Germany? Who were the Germans? She did not have the slightest idea. No more than concerning France for that matter. Yet she was a Frenchwoman, or as good as one, if she was anything at all. All her memories and all her impressions had come to her from France.

First of all there had been Marseilles. It was a city which her mother, who was clean and orderly, had called “upside-down” because of all the laundry drying before the windows in the poor districts and because of all the melon, orange and pomegranate peelings and the shells of

sea-food like mussels, sea-urchins and winkles which are strewn about in the streets. But so amusing! With its people who talk and discuss in order to have a good laugh later on; its smiling sky and warm earth, its easy existence and the refreshing breeze from the sea. . . . When her Italian employers left for a new post her mother had not been willing to follow them. She had taken a position in a bourgeois family—wealthy merchants—who entertained largely and who had engaged the little girl as a maid at the same time. Frieda was sixteen years old at that time. Mr. Henry, the young man of the house, had found her to his liking almost at once. The fact is that she was pleasing at that age with her plump limbs, the pulp of her flesh abundant and yet quite firm and muscular as well. The sun of the south had been favorable to the budding forth of this child of the Rhine.

. . . She had abandoned herself almost at once. It had seemed so natural for her to say "yes" when she had been asked to abandon her charms. And this by a real gentleman! It was he who had given her her child. And it had seemed quite natural to her too and to her mother as well, when she had been dismissed—already pregnant; her mother also had a fatherless child. Doubtlessly the origin of both of them was responsible for this resignation and this submission to man's desire. They had come from those Rhineland districts where, at that time, a third of the children were illegitimate.

Nevertheless she had loved her boy very deeply and she had also loved and served faithfully the honest fellow from Maillezargues—an employee of the P. L. M. road, who had taken her for a companion. They were dead now—both of them. All these misfortunes had not made her life a happy one. But such was her life and all these things had given her a personality of her own.

She did not realize all this exactly as it is written. She merely sensed it. . . . And after that, when Frieda had left Marseilles along with her Cevenol who was still alive at that time, there had been during thirty years this little corner of Paris bounded by the Gare de Lyon, the Place de la Bastille and the Faubourg Saint-Antoine where she had

formed all her habits and where the rest of her existence had been spent. Outside of this sphere, even in Paris itself, she felt lost. Horribly lost.

But concerning actualities she did not bother herself in the least. War was something which did not concern her: it was no woman's affair; it was for men only. Madame Borge prepared her lunch, ate it calmly and then took her wash-iron, her "bluing," her Marseilles soap, and sallied forth to the laundry after having collected at Madame Soupot's, the bakery of the rue de Fourcy, a large pile of soiled linen. During the entire afternoon she pounded endlessly with her iron, bespattered with the soapy foam and listening, next to her, to the lamentations of mothers whose children or whose husbands had been mobilized. They cursed the Huns, exclaiming that they were going to hand them a good beating. Madame Borge did not protest or seek to deny. Anyway it made no difference to her what might happen to all of them.

Several days passed by with everything just as it had been—perfectly quiet. Towards the end of the week as she was about to regain her lodgings at noon, after having finished some house-cleaning, her janitress handed her a summons from the police commissioner.

"Madame Bortges—Frieda," she read. "I told the policeman that it wasn't your name and that it was not spelled like that. But he left the letter just the same."

Madame Borge presented herself at the police station. It was already filled with people who were waiting. All of them were poor and most of them were Jews. There are a great many of them in this district. "Huns," she overheard one of the employees grumble. They were born either in Silesia or in German Poland. Some of them were already aware of what was going to happen to them; accustomed to being driven from everywhere, practically nomads, they were calmly resigned. Still, some of them were seen to cry. Others, and they were of course the dangerous ones, maintained their cheerfulness.

"Why have they ordered you here?" asked Madame Borge.

"Because we are Germans. . . . Consequently we are to be hustled off to the concentration camp. . . . We will be fed for nothing!"

After a fairly long time Madame Borge appeared before the commissioner and his secretary.

"Your name is Frieda Bortges and you were born at Mittelhausen, near Cologne, Germany, the 27th of November, 1868—is this not so?"

She nodded her assent.

"Good. Get your small affairs together. The packages must not weigh more than twenty kilos. You are to be at the Gare d'Austerlitz, day after tomorrow in time to take the 8.50 train."

"To go where, Monsieur le Commissioner?" she inquired with her heart contracted.

"To the concentration camp, of course . . ."

He turned and glanced at his records.

"La Gresine, Creuse."

She trembled visibly. She fell on her knees. She even tried to kiss the man's feet.

"Allow them to leave me here, Monsieur the Commissioner, do let them leave me here! It is forty-four years now that I have been in France and I am but forty-six. I am not a German, I am French! My man-friend was a Frenchman employed by the P. L. M. They will tell you . . ."

"Your friend? . . . Were you married to a Frenchman?"

"No, not married. . . . But it amounted to the same thing! I am a good woman. I have never led an evil life! They can also tell you . . ."

There were some forty more German subjects to attend to and to hand their notifications to. And furthermore this case was quite clear and simple.

"Not married. . . . Therefore you are still a German. . . . Present yourself day after tomorrow at the Gare d'Austerlitz at 8.50. Do you understand?"

"But what am I going to do in the midst of all those people? I don't know any German, Monsieur! I won't be able to say a word to them, I don't even know them!"

I would rather go among the Arabs, in the land of the Arabs. When I was in Marseilles I used to see some Arabs. I have never seen any Germans."

She persisted: "I would rather die! Let them kill me right away!"

"Bring in the next one!" said the commissioner.

When she had gone the secretary, however, exclaimed:

"But after all, after all, if she does not speak German. . . . And that is quite possible. She was practically born in France. . . . Arrived in Marseilles in 1875. It's noted on her card."

"There are some who were actually born here," replied his superior. "How does that change anything? A governmental order is a governmental order. And above all in time of war. Everything is turned upside-down. During peace-times they say: 'It is better to allow ten guilty ones to escape than to sentence one innocent person.' During war-times one defends one's skin, and the nation's skin too. And so they say: 'It is wiser to condemn ten innocent people than to leave one single dangerous creature at liberty.'"

"That is indeed true . . . but it is severe!"

The commissioner shrugged his shoulders. They were to see more pitiful cases than this. And then there existed the necessity of assuring perfect order in the streets and of proving to the excited people that the necessary precautions had been taken against all spies. . . . However, as he was a good-hearted fellow, he wrote in the margin of the card made out for this Bortges woman exactly as it was to follow her to the camp the following remark: "Favorable references. Probably inoffensive."

"What good will that do?" inquired the secretary.

"Oh well! . . . when things are overcrowded and if the war lasts, they may send her on into Germany. An exchange of prisoners, you know, or in some other way perhaps . . ."

"And do you think that will make her any happier?"

"Well, I say! After all you are too difficult to please. Take it for granted that there are fifty thousand Germans in France. But we can't however render fifty thousand

different judgments concerning them and their individual cases. I suggested to you the least trying of all as regards to this woman. . . . And, after all, it is none of our affair!"

"The least trying, did you say? . . ."

II

" . . . Don't cry, my hefty one, you must not cry. . . . We won't have very much of this life! Within eight days they will be in Paris and we will enter after them. Peace will be signed immediately."

It was Mr. Otto Bergmann who thus offered his consolation to Frieda. For twenty years Mr. Bergmann, of Berlin, had managed the Paris branch of an important firm dealing in so-called Viennese articles which were manufactured by Czech labor in Austrian Bohemia, articles such as crystal-ware, glass-ware, "art" bronzes of rare taste and of a price defying all competition. No one admired Paris and was more of a Parisian than Mr. Bergmann. At least he prided himself on this. The thought that any one could live in Berlin filled him with genuine disgust. In spite of this he preserved behind the firmly locked and opaque folding-doors of a bookcase the entire collection of German authors on the German victories of 1870 and every night he would read a few pages from them with pride and delight. France, to him, was a land already half-conquered and which was on the point of being completely dominated. Aside from this he held nothing against it. It was even rather sympathetic to him; very much indeed like some kind of a colony.

He added: "They really must accept us nicely! Firstly, it is for their own good. France, you see, France! . . . Ah! it would indeed be a fine country with only five hundred thousand Germans to put it to good use. Not more than that, no, not more! A few Germans just to organize things and the French to obey."

Frieda did not reply. She was kneeling on the right bank of the small stream which skirted the camp. Beside her was the washing which the prisoners had entrusted

to her to clean. The livelihood of poor people is mediocre and devoid of genuine satisfaction, but, in a certain sense, it is always assured. That which Frieda had done for so many years in Paris to earn her daily bread she now accomplished today, while a prisoner at La Gresine, and she would doubtlessly continue doing so for the rest of her life. But she earned this bread; or rather she was able to add a few things to the bare existence provided by the Government. Materially she was less unfortunate than many others of intellectual occupations who had arrived there penniless. As for Mr. Bergmann, he was wealthy. He had taken his precautions. His well-filled pocket-book had enabled him to become one of Frieda's customers. And now he was endeavoring to converse with her, having run across her as he was going fishing accompanied by a young man for whom he seemed disposed to show a certain liking. When confined one must amuse one's self and the heart is always ready to speak. Mr. Bergmann was quite apt to be sensual as well as being a sentimentalist. Furthermore he desired that this little holiday, which was rather uncomfortable on the whole, should not endure forever.

As Madame Borge remained silent he realized that he had spoken in German.

"So it is true, then; you understand only French. . . . What an amusing situation. . . . You are a very poor German, Frieda! A German must continue speaking his language everywhere."

She was patient, submissive and respectful of human beings of a superior order who are well dressed and who provide work for the unfortunate. She answered him politely:

"But I am not German, Mr. Bergmann. I don't know why they put me here. It is all a mistake. I said as much to the gentleman at the head-office when I reached here."

"If you are not a German, Frieda, then what are you?"

"I . . . I don't know!" she observed with some astonishment.

Then, recklessly, she added:

"I don't give a darn as to what I am! I was born in

Germany and I am not a German. I have lived all my life in France, among the French, but it seems that I am not French. And so I don't care a darn bit, I don't care a bit! I don't want to force myself on any one. If they don't want me I don't want them. . . . Why have they caused me such trouble? Never have I harmed them. Why have they hurt me?"

Mr. Bergmann had the instinct, common enough in those of his race, of proselytism. He suggested:

"Indeed, Frieda, you see that they have harmed you. . . . Germany has not done so. You must love Germany dearly. You do not know that land but it is immense, beautiful and it is generous—do you understand? If these people ever set you free again, you who are so French in your ways and speak only French, they will not be suspicious of you. Even if you should not be able to go any further than Switzerland. . . . In Switzerland you will be able to render some service. Every German should render all the service he can in time of war, according to his station."

"What services?"

"Well . . . every kind. And they are well paid."

Frieda ignored what a mother-land means. Events in themselves, and her misfortune, proved to her that she had none. Also, she begrudged those who had just said to her: "You do not belong to us. You are a foreigner—an enemy from whom we must preserve ourselves." But it had not been in vain that during all her existence she had breathed, along with the very air, the speech of the men and women—sparing, elementary and plain as it had been—the customs, the point of view and the obscure sentiments which now governed her very life. And if there is one thing among the modest people of France which strongly arouses their ire, loathing and disgust, it is anything which has to do with the police, spies or stool-pigeons.

She dipped a man's pair of pants in the water, beat it with her wash-iron, and, lifting her head, exclaimed distinctly:

"You pig!"

Mr. Bergmann was careful not to insist. It was not his way of doing things. A few minutes later, however, in an off-hand manner, he informed Mr. Adolphus Merl—the young man to whom he was so affectionately attached—that, in his opinion, and as a result of his little experience, this Bortges woman was “not reliable.”

He knew very well what turn events would take. Before very long nobody in the camp would speak to Frieda. She was a woman who betrayed Germany or who, in all events, would not hesitate to betray her should the opportunity arrive. She was soon condemned to the torture of solitude: the most painful of all for a person like her—illiterate, slow of thought and whose confused ideas, undefined and without form, hurt her because they remained unexpressed.

There was a little Jewish tailor in the camp. The irony of fate and the oddities of police registration had decreed that this man—poor among the very poorest—should be called Rothschild.

His experience was not without a certain bearing, in some respects, with that of Frieda's, although, born at Frankfort, he had the advantage of knowing the popular dialect of that part of Germany. But he also had come to Paris quite young, at the age of twenty, in order to escape military service with the Prussian army. He had no fondness either for blows, death or discipline. Prompt to fulfill the duties of his religion, he thought only of that creed on Saturdays, and, during the week, of how to eat “chastily.” But above all he considered that his means did not permit him to devote two years of his life to a trade which brings in no returns, while during this time he faithfully nourished—by the help of his hands—his old father and mother who were both well on in years. In fact he had concerned himself with politics only during the time of the Dreyfus affair. Since then he had ceased reading the papers, finding nothing at all of interest in them. This war into which the whole world was hurling itself remained indifferent to him. However, he might have shown a trifle more sympathy for France, where the Jews are well treated, than for Germany, where they are de-

spised although obliged to assume the same burdens as the Christians—a thing which struck him as being unjust. But he considered it wise not to show this sentiment. When one is among the humble, the very humble, one must be prudent.

Although one would not have suspected it to look at him, because he had undergone more misery, he was a trifle younger than Frieda whose age, however, did not frighten him in the least. In this camp of La Gresine, where many were without occupation, sensuality added itself to desperate boredom among almost all who were there. At times it manifested itself furiously, sometimes languidly, produced as it was by confinement, suspense and the hope of some victory which was at that time considered as being inevitable and close at hand and which would avenge these inmates for the humiliating situation which circumstances had forced upon them. While waiting until the two sexes were divided into separate camps there was, at La Gresine, a sort of subdivision for families; one for the men and one for the women. This fact did not prevent the forming of passionate liaisons or less durable passing attachments between the people of one division and another or even between the people of one quarter. Never having been difficult to please, the tailor had never been deprived of a mistress during the endless penury which he had always known. At this time he estimated Frieda as being still desirable. Also, he gave her proof of this. At first the desires of the unfortunate woman were but barely aroused; but she was in such dire need of not being left alone and, as she would say to herself, of having some one to think of afterwards! If she had not given in to him before it had not been because she had considered herself too good, but merely in order to prolong the pleasure it afforded her. Nor did he, either, urge her on too much. His pronounced characteristic was patience. It was the kind of patience found in a kindly old man who trusts in Providence. The Lord is indeed eternal and He has plenty of time!

In truth he respected Madame Borge. His dealings with people of humble origin had taught him to understand

this type of woman; a woman with no lowly tendencies, honest enough, industrious and accustomed not to ask anything of anybody. Towards the end of August the evenings are very long. When he could no longer see clearly enough to thread his needle he would go and join her on the banks of the stream. His demonstrations of affection were not very refined. They consisted in rather rude attempts to draw her to him; efforts which she prevented—and also in crude expressions which did not startle her in the least. Beyond the valley where lay the camp, the mountains of granite and slate with their sweet heather bathed in the ruddy glow of the setting sun and the broad, steep ravines limited the horizon in an abrupt but not impressive manner. Frieda, however, hated it all. She was incapable of appreciating anything but the sight of free human beings moving about in the broad or narrow streets of a large city, with its constantly changing odors. She loved all these varied smells: that of the bread in the bakeries; the odor of alcohol and anise-seed in the vicinity of the cheap, popular bars; the smoked-herring odor or the spicy smell in the groceries; and that coming from the showcases in front of the cheap perfumery shops. And again, along the rue de Fourcy, she enjoyed the odor of balsam filtering from the laboratories and the workrooms of druggists' supply houses.

"It is quite impossible to live here, quite impossible," she would say, seized with infinite sadness.

"Man lives everywhere," answered the Jew. "It is truly surprising the places where he is able to live: places where even animals would die. . . . But this will not last long! In a month or six weeks all will be over. Then we shall return to Paris, Frieda!"

It was then the general belief that the war would be of short duration. Madame Borge listened to all this as one listens—on some stifling and rain-inviting day when at length the cooling showers are about to fall—to a voice which exclaims: "The air is fresher now. Soon we will be able to breathe again!" And, furthermore, this was conversation! They were French expressions, words of her own language, the only one which she could understand.

Her yearning for her home became less painful and Frieda thought: "Yes, when all this is over with we will leave together. . . . Perhaps we will grow old together!"

This prospect did not please the tailor in the least. It was too difficult to earn one's livelihood to hope to end one's days with a Christian, or, for that matter, with any woman! But Frieda did not know anything of all this. Little by little her affection had been won and she thought to herself: "Pretty soon now—perhaps in one or two days—I will reward him with what he desires!"

The Jew did not come to the stream the following day nor the day after. Frieda waited for him in vain. It hurt her more than she would have imagined. By degrees she had accustomed herself to looking forward during the whole day to this short hour of conversation with a man to whom she had accorded her confidence, and the rest of the time it was quite as though she were still talking with him. She would ask questions and answer them herself. The thought that he was there, quite close to her, somehow helped her to understand her own thoughts.

No one gave her any washing to do any more. She did not understand the reason for this and it surprised her. She was obliged to accept just what was furnished to her by the authorities. This seemed very severe to her now, just at the time when she would need some extra money to buy a few things and put on a brave front—as she would say to herself in Marseilles dialect—in memory of her youth! . . . The third day, Frieda took a bundle of her own laundry, as if it had been that of some client's to whom she was delivering it, and ventured into the men's quarters of the camp in order to explain the mystery.

She found the tailor in his accustomed place out of doors. He was working in the gloaming. Timidly she advanced.

"Good day to you, Mr. Rothschild!"

He raised his eyes to look at her and then coldly replied:

"Good day, Madame."

He did not call her Frieda any more—but "Madame." That was all. He bent over his work again. The camp discipline had decreed that Frieda was not to be trusted and

that from henceforth on she should be kept apart from the others. He was a Jew and, consequently, he was also subject to suspicion. Furthermore he was of too little consequence to dare break an order issued by unknown but competent officials of the French administration whom the prisoners obeyed. In addition it was an order that was reinforced by the general sentiment prevailing among this small tribe of people assembled in this place against their will and which professed with greater ardor than ever their deep love for the great mother country. The tailor had had time to think it all over. It was really not worth while to compromise one's self and lose customers merely on account of Madame Borge.

"Mr. Rothschild," she repeated, her eyes filled with tears, "what have I done to you, Mr. Rothschild? Please, please do tell me!"

Very carefully he drew the thread evenly along the surface of the material, stuck the needle through his tattered shirt, took up his scissors, folded the suit he was repairing and entered the low camp-shed. He had no love for scenes and he sensed that this woman was about to create one; a scene which would be of no avail, unless it was to annoy him.

That was all there was to it. Never again did she chance across this man she had been on the point of loving, already loved, indeed, now in her declining years. She was left all alone, horribly so, in a silence which crushed her beneath its weight.

It was a silence that no one was willing to break and which defied all her advances, innocent ruses and appeals. It was a silence that she could feel slowly killing her. Her heart was so sad and so heavy that it seemed to her that she could feel it invade her entire breast and even surge with a low groan to her very lips. Frieda had always been a good, healthy woman with an even disposition—easy-going and submissive. But she was now of that dangerous and unsettled age. The blood would suddenly stream into her face and she would lose that fine, robust carriage. At times she was seized by the yearning to murder, yes, to murder! It was a desire to kill all these people whom she had never

harméd but who persecuted her and were the cause of her misfortune. Why had their country declared war? And why did they continue even now treacherously to deprive her of that trifling little thing—that affection to which she had hoped to attach firmly her miserable existence? Kill? No, she did not know how to kill. She had not been born for that. But it was another thing to bite, slash and insult them all. To insult them would at least call for words. That, indeed, would comfort her.

It was at this point that something occurred. It was an event of tremendous importance which was about to change the whole course of the war—and the face of the globe. It even reached this little corner of France where lay huddled together some five hundred Germans filled with impatient hopes, positive of the victory of their far-off compatriots who were crushing the soil of France under heel and who were armed and filled with the determination to win.

One fine day without any explanations whatever, and with a discretion which was contradicted only by the gaiety of the employees and the guardians and the enthusiastic stories furnished by the tradesmen who were allowed to enter the camp, the famous official statement was posted on the door of the head-office and on the doors of all the barracks, announcing the victory of the Marne, the halting of the march on Paris and the retreat of the German armies.

So this was not to be the hour after all when France was to be forced to her knees and Germany to become mistress of the world? All these interned subjects loved devotedly and passionately their own country. They had hoped for her victory and had believed it to be assured. And now it would seem that she was retreating and that it would be necessary to wait there indefinitely, always watched, humiliated and captive! But for how long a time? And what if it should mean defeat!

But it is impossible to live without having some solid reason for doing so. Man instinctively dreads uncertainty. He casts it off as he would a burden. Only a few hours had elapsed before there broke out throughout the

entire camp murmurs and then shouts of disdain and disbelief.

"Es ist nicht wahr! Es ist nicht wahr!"

With boisterous laughter they reassured themselves and braced themselves against something which they refused to accept and which they denied with all their heart, passion and innermost desires.

Frieda did not understand their language. She asked a guardian:

"What are they all saying?"

"They say that it is not true . . ."

It was then her turn to burst out laughing. It frightened them. It was a dangerous laugh full of wickedness and evil delight. She shouted:

"Indeed it is true! It is true! We will kick them all the way back to Berlin! We will slaughter them wholesale! It will make a lot of meat—dirty meat! It will make plenty of bad dog-meat!"

"Who is she?" they inquired, for some of the prisoners did not know her at all.

"She is a woman who would betray us," said Mr. Bergmann. "She is a false German who wants to be French."

At the same instant his fine friend, Mr. Merl, advanced towards Frieda, clenching his fists, and some woman grabbed her by her comb, pulling out her hair in fistfuls and throwing her to the ground. Frieda got to her feet again. She spat in Mr. Merl's face and shouted. . . . She shouted things which cannot be repeated. During all the long, interminable days when no one would speak to her any more she had had plenty of time to look about her. She was aware of everything that was going on in the camp. Everything! She told of the shameful deeds of the women and of the corruption of the men. She screamed all this in horrible words which she had picked up in the street.

The same woman—or another one—tore her face with her long finger-nails. Each cheek was marked with four deep finger-traces which left bloody indentations. Others struck her on her breasts and in the stomach. In her anger and madness she had not taken into consideration that

there would be so many against her and that they would crush her like a herd of buffalo would trample a snarling dog under hoof. Of her own accord she allowed herself to fall face downward on the ground. They flogged her and bruised her entire body with brutal kicks. At the same time the men laughed at her obscene nudity while the women made light of her sex. She raised herself and struggled to her feet, seeking to escape. She was mad, mad with fright, and a look of mortal terror was in her eyes. She was dripping with blood and dirty perspiration. Her clothing was in tatters and she felt herself to be practically nude before the leering glances and low jests cast at her by the crowd. Her mad flight led her to the edge of the stream. There she was cornered and blocked. Horror overwhelmed her and she sank down. The base passions of the mob broke loose above her. She heard some one calling: "The scoundrels! The dirty scoundrels!" It was the guardians of the camp who were coming to her aid. They were delivering blows right and left in order to fight their way to her. She also felt that people had seized her by the legs and shoulders. She could hear them shouting: "Into the stream with her! Into the stream!" Then she felt them swinging her back and forth. . . .

After that came the sound of her body striking the liquid surface of the flood and the scraping of her body against the rocks on the bottom.

III

And now we find her seated in a third-class railway compartment with her bundle of things by her side. She had just changed trains at Ussel. They had said to her: "Change again at Clermont-Ferrand and after that you will reach Paris." But she is not to remain there. Her traveling papers indicate that immediately upon her arrival she is to present herself at Police Headquarters, who will notify her as to the day and hour of her departure for Germany by way of Switzerland.

Frieda had passed three weeks in the camp infirmary. One arm had been half torn off and her whole body was a

mass of bruises. Her eyes and nerves were alive with such terror that she would hide her head under the covers, at the merest moving shadow. The administration had taken, so it seems, the most humane course possible, inasmuch as they could not leave her among the others without endangering her very existence! And then, after all, what was the use of continuing to incur the expense of feeding and watching over a woman who was so evidently inoffensive? Frieda at first did not understand anything as to what was going on—because of her terrified condition—except that she was going to see Paris again. But for how long? She did not know. They had told her at La Gresine that they knew nothing at all about it. Maybe they wanted to be kind. But she did not want to recall all that. She was leaving those brutal monsters behind. The Sister who had nursed her at the infirmary had congratulated her—as if it had been a divine favor—on the fine chance which had been afforded her. She had even suggested: “Why should you go as far as Germany? In Switzerland you will find good people who speak French?”

We find Frieda’s face still bearing the blue scabs of the horrible scratches. But there is no mirror here and besides, she has no thought of looking at herself. Paris! Paris! She is very much like some animal who knows it is about to regain its hole and who feels certain of finding safety there.

She has brought her meager provisions along with her and she relishes them gayly. There are other people present in the compartment—good people. She has not told them who she is and they speak to her. She also talks—in French, her own tongue, which is indeed French! Some one offers her some wine and she repays the attention with an orange. She is happy, really happy. She would like to have it be like this forever!

Upon reaching the Gare d’Austerlitz she engages a carriage—an old-time one. Autos were not intended for her—so she thinks, and, as she is most obedient, she has herself driven at once to the Police Headquarters. There she shows them her traveling papers and a policeman directs her to a wooden shed in the center of the courtyard. The

clerk on duty there examines her papers and consults a register. He reads: "‘Bortges, Frieda, German nationality, authorized to re-enter Germany.’ You are to be at the Gare de Lyon day after tomorrow at 9.05 in the morning. There will be a party leaving under guard. Keep this slip and have it stamped at the frontier. . . .”

Day after tomorrow . . . in two days’ time! Frieda’s heart is crushed by the news. What is Switzerland like? She does not know any one there. And how is she going to live? But this is not what frightens her the most. She has her hands and she knows how to work. But it is the awful Unknown! . . . And what if they won’t allow her to remain in Switzerland? It is quite possible, inasmuch as they drive her from everywhere, that nobody will want to have her any more at all. If so—they will send her on into Germany. The Germans! . . . She trembles at the mere thought of them. It seems to her that it will always be the same when she is among them; just as it had been with those who had just tortured her. Dear Lord! Dear Lord! How sorrowful is poor Frieda’s heart.

However it is not all this which causes her to stop her carriage at the corner of the Place du Parvis where there is a wine-merchant. She knows what the custom is. She stops there in order to offer something to the driver. The old fellow orders a “picon-curaco” and Frieda asks for the same drink. The insidious strength of the alcohol and spirits goes to her head and does her some good—for the time being. Well, and after all! The war won’t last forever! She will come back again to her beloved Paris! It is but a trying moment to endure. That’s all. She had passed through others before this one.

But finally she reaches her lodgings—the old house which was formerly “my home.” The janitress is not in her office. She waits a few minutes in the alley-way. Her temples are throbbing without her knowing the reason. She recognizes everything—the small, windowed door giving onto the street; the little brass lamp, at present unlighted, at the head of the stairs; and the old, familiar odor.

It is not a very nice odor, for it is that of the old houses of Paris in the populous districts with their open drains exposed on every landing. But it seems quite delicious to her. . . . Now the janitress's little boy is seen coming back from school with his book-sack on his shoulders. He examines her, becomes frightened and scurries past her like a scared mouse, crying out as he reaches the stairs:

"Mamma! Mamma! The spy is here! The spy has returned!"

Frieda could not have foreseen all this. For twenty years she had been known in this house as Madame Borge—a Frenchwoman like all the others; a real Frenchwoman from the south of France! And then suddenly the police had discovered that she was a German. And why was it, indeed, that no one had ever known that she was German? Why had she concealed this fact from all? Why had she been sent to a detention camp? Frieda did not suspect it—but within two months' time she had become the spy of the rue des Nonnains-d'Hyerres. The entire neighborhood, after having at first been rudely shocked by the news, had finally become proud of the fact.

The janitress came downstairs. She pressed her lips together and considered the situation. Janitresses must be polite but they must also show their authority. They are responsible for the maintaining of good order, cleanliness and respectability. Frieda said: "Good morning, Madame François!" She replied in a far away voice: "Good morning."

"I left . . . I left a few things in my chamber," implored Frieda. "Has it been rented?"

No, the room had not in fact been let. At the beginning of the war so many people were absent from Paris! The janitress however replied in the affirmative:

"Yes, it has been let."

"Are you quite certain," pleaded Frieda tremblingly, "quite certain?"

"When I tell you that it has been let!"

"Well, what about my things then?"

In truth her affairs were still there in her room. There had been no necessity for taking them out. But the

janitress did not want to have to admit that the room was unoccupied. She said:

"My husband has locked them up in the garret. He has kept the key. Come back again tomorrow. . . ."

"And where am I to go in the meanwhile?"

The janitress merely shrugged her shoulders. That was none of her affair.

Right near the house stands the Hotel de la Dordogne et de la Creuse where a great many masons reside. Madame Borge was well known there. Everybody knew her in this street. But there was no room to be had for her in that hotel—nor anywhere else in the neighborhood. She understood the reason why. . . .

Frieda by this time was hungry. She entered a little bar and restaurant place in the rue François-Miron. They did not refuse to serve her there but no one spoke to her. It is even probable that somebody notified a policeman. He came to investigate and he asked her for her papers. Then he exclaimed, far more for the benefit of the owners of the place than for Frieda:

"You must clear out of here within two days' time. Don't let me see you about after that!"

Everywhere in this quarter which was hers and which had become her country she encountered only bleak silence and suspicious, unkind glances.

It was only in a disreputable hotel in the rue des Rosiers that Frieda was finally able to find shelter. There they did not know her face and they deigned to accept her after she had written her name, "Madame Borge," on the desk register. She threw herself down on the straw mattress placed on the iron bed and wept for a long, long time—prostrated. She would have liked very much to sleep—profoundly. But she was quite unable to sleep because of one single, obsessing and abominable thought. . . .

"It does not merely mean misfortune for one day, one year or even two. . . . They don't want me any more at all. They will never want to see me again. There is no longer any place in the world where I can go. The Germans have already tried to kill me. The French are now driving me away! . . ."

She opened her traveling cases and took from a small cardboard box the photograph of her child—the poor little thing who had been dead for so long now—and also that of the Frenchman with whom she had lived. It seemed to her that she loathed them both. Ah! How she detested them! She tore the photos up and trampled the pieces on the tile floor of her room.

She also had a little silver watch that her Frenchman had given her. It was her one piece of jewelry. Opening the window she threw it out at random along with the chain.

There came a slight tinkle from below. This sound seemed to help her come to a definite decision. She leaned out of the window . . . far out. . . . There was a terrifying instant during which she hung on to the shutters. But they were of very old wood which soon gave way. . . . Then there came another sound—a heavier and a more massive one from the pavement far below.

THE PRODIGAL SON AND HIS FATHER

By FRANCIS DE MIOMANDRE

(From *Les Œuvres Libres*)

WHILE strolling up the gravel path leading to his house, his fishing gear slung across his back like some tall, thin rifle, M. Casimir Rabustel was ruminating thoughts that were anything but pleasant.

Everything had gone wrong with him that day. He had started by having a disagreeable episode with his younger son, Simon, a scamp who positively refused to lend himself to any of the promising schemes elaborated by his family for his employment, in short a young anarchist of the worst kind. The young wretch, although now of age, showed every intention of continuing to lead the idle life people had complacently smiled upon when he was eighteen. His thoughts were all of motor cars, cabarets and dancing. Many a time M. Rabustel had tried to persuade him that this was no life for the descendant of so sound a family, grown respectable as it had through many years of hard labor in the manufacture of perfumes. That very morning an attempt at amicable explanations on the subject had been foiled by the young fool's running away with a cheeky scoff.

M. Rabustel had sought consolation from this check by hoping for a miraculous catch of fish. The Marne was a fruitful river as a rule, but today all efforts to get any fish out of it had failed lamentably. He had had two tries at it, one of three and one of six hours' duration; and now he was wending his way homewards with an empty bag and an exceedingly bad temper.

When he entered the dining room, he perceived he must be late for dinner. His elder son, Jacques, was sitting at table, likewise his fiancée, Gisele Gorrier, a young girl of

the neighborhood. But the irate father noticed further that some one was even later than he was himself; namely, that undesirable younger son Simon.

He glanced round the room angrily and curtly gave an order to the valet who, impassive, was waiting behind his chair:

"Serve immediately."

The man, slightly taken aback, seemed to hesitate.

"We will not wait for Monsieur Simon."

There was a tinge of bitterness in the words. Barely had they been uttered when there came bouncing in through the window a very supple and elegant young man, who greeted everybody with a pleasant air and remarked smilingly:

"I see I'm not really late, since no one has begun eating yet."

M. Rabustel was not at all impressed with this way of looking at the situation and launched out on a vigorous counter-attack.

"You are quite wrong, my dear fellow. You are late, very late"—and he waved his hand towards the clock that pointed to a quarter past eight—"and we have been waiting for you a whole quarter of an hour."

Since M. Rabustel had come in only thirty seconds before, those present looked up in slight astonishment. But old men have a right to a certain amount of license; when they find it necessary to stretch the truth a trifle, one has to accept it smilingly. Jacques and Gisele let their heads drop again and fixed their eyes on their empty plates. But Simon, who had espied his father going up the path from the river while he was hustling along the station road, exclaimed impulsively:

"Well, I never! If that isn't the limit. . . . Had I only put a spurt on, I would have reached here before you."

These were impertinent and challenging words, the old gentleman felt, and they put the finishing touches on his ill-humor. Like an inflated cobra he rose furiously. Before any intelligible words could be distinguished, one could hear an inarticulate gurgling at the back of his throat. At last speech came:

"You cheeky brat, I forbid you to speak to me in that tone. If your mother could hear you, she would die all over again. In the first place, where have you sprung from just now?"

"From Paris."

"Of course . . . Paris! But where from in Paris? Some dancing den? Some low pub? Some gambling hell?"

"Dear old Pa," remarked the young man with exasperating calm, "you do speak slovenly, don't you? You talk to me about slang? Let me tell you the places you refer to in such inelegant terms are, in good society, referred to as dancing teas, American bars and clubs. But, joking apart, I am quite ready to satisfy your parental curiosity. Apart from the three-quarters of an hour spent just now in a wearisome crawler of a train, I have just come out of a bar in the Champs Elysées, where I won four hundred francs at poker. The only thing about a bar is that the only nourishment you get is cocktails, coffee beans and lemon pips, so I am rather hungry. What about giving Urbain the hint to pour out some soup?"

"Not at all. We will have soup when we have had the last, the supreme, clearing up of things. I started it this morning, but you ran away without listening, under some frivolous pretext. We are going to take it up again now, and it is going to be final. For the last time, let me tell you I am sick of your free and easy manners. I have not worked hard all my life to keep a lazy, idle, good-for-nothing lump who trails our honorable name through the Lord knows what impossible dens. You are going to make some serious decision, my boy, and you are going to make it right now."

"Before the soup?"

"Certainly. Before the soup."

"You know, Pa, this sort of thing is usually performed over the coffee and liqueurs, when one has a feeling of comfortable fullness. . . ."

"Well, my boy, I have decided otherwise. You are not going to eat another bite in this house till you have given me a satisfactory answer. At twenty, your brother

Jacques had a job . . . a modest job, it is true, but . . ."

"Modest's the word. Ninety francs a month to work in a varnish factory!"

This recall of his humble start in life was somewhat painful to Jacques, who rose blushing, followed in both respects by his fiancée. So, until the end of the play, all four remained standing round the table set with empty plates. The elder brother opened his mouth, but his father stopped him; he was not going to have any red herrings drawn across this trail.

"Jacques at any rate did not demand anything from anybody. You are bleeding me white. Every day your bills come in. Your tailor, your shoemaker, your shirtmaker . . . I pay them all, and many others besides. And your pocket money over and above it all. I tell you it is going to stop. Are you going to take on a job in my old partner Frelon's firm or not? Yes or no?"

"To slave like a cab horse for four hundred francs a month with the prospect of some day marrying the Frelon female hope, a thing that winks and dances like a hysterical elephant? No, thanks. I don't feel any call for that sort of life."

"There is no question of marrying that highly estimable young lady, whom they would not give you anyway. You are trying to create a diversion. The question is just this: are you going to do that Frelon job, or are you not?"

"Do the job? I might if it was a Raffles job. That might bring in some cash, though I don't suppose the old fogey keeps much cash at home. As gentleman-burglar, I don't mind. But not as either employee or son-in-law. No, thanks. I'm not cut out for a stevedore."

"For the last time, I . . ."

"For the Lord's sake, Pa, don't start that sentence all over again. It's not even rhythmical or pretty. I am going to set you at ease in a minute by making a solemn declaration, which, incidentally, will demonstrate to you the futility of your far-seeing plans, to use the language of the statesman. I want to go away . . ."

"What's that?"

"I want to go away. I intended telling you this morning, but you were busy cutting your beard, and I was afraid you might make a slip and cut your throat instead . . ."

"You wretch . . ."

"However, now I see you so calm and cool and composed, I will explain all about it. Besides, I have thought it out further at the bar, while crunching some coffee beans. And I understood suddenly . . . yes, honor bright, it flashed on me all of a sudden. Sort of revelation, don't you know. I understood that this life, the kind of life you can offer me, whether in this country house of yours or in our Paris flat, or even as stevedore and son-in-law of your esteemed old pal Frelon, is quite out of the question for me. My dreams are much vaster."

"Go on, go on!"

"Pa, I simply must go away. Somewhere in the Bible there is a chap like that. I don't think he had a name, but one fine day he informed his father he was sick and tired of living at home . . ."

"And you dare compare yourself to him? To a historic figure? To the Prodigal Son? You?"

"Ah, yes, that's it, the Prodigal Son. I thought he had no name, but he had a nickname."

"And I suppose you intend coming back some day and having me kill a fatted calf for you?"

"Now don't get romantic, Pa. Besides, you know I hate veal. . . . Since we are speaking of feasting, I must say I would much rather have told you all this between the cheese and the fruit. But it was your own wish, so I will leave without even having tasted of this excellent soup. By Jove! It is getting late . . . if I miss that nine o'clock train I will be stuck on that confounded station platform till midnight. . . . So, Pa dear, let the curtain fall on this solemn interlude and give me your benediction . . ."

Hearing these words, the old gentleman nearly choked with rage. Like an ill-regulated water tap, he emitted some painful gurglings and finally burst into a flood of speech:

"My benediction?" he shouted. "You add impertinence to mutiny, Sir. You ingrate, insolent, infamous puppy! After twenty-one years of unremitting care and attention,

this is the trick you play on me. . . . Benediction indeed, it's malediction I'm going to give you . . ."

"Draw it mild, Pa. I don't think the father of the Prodigal Son actually cursed his son. You're exaggerating. He just let him go, like a . . ."

"I don't want to be told to imitate anybody. Get out if you want to, but you'll take my curses with you."

"Thanks for small mercies, Pa. But it's better to take that away with me than nothing. If I strike any interesting landscapes, I'll drop you some picture postcards."

Having thus spoken, Master Simon bowed respectfully to his father, waved his hand in friendly fashion to his brother, blew a kiss to Gisele Gorrier, tapped old Urbain affectionately on the shoulder, and then, like a kind of graceful and absurd bird, went out the way he had come, that is to say, through the window.

To describe what followed in M. Rabustel's dining room, the dazed amazement of those present, the furious, desperate rage of the scorned father, were a task above the present writer's capabilities, he being but a humble storyteller and no lyric poet. This, incidentally, is a much better thing to be, for story-tellers have one inestimable privilege, that of being superior to space and time barriers. So this evening and the description of it will be left to the reader's imagination. . . .

Leaving untouched the night of anxiety and suffering of that poor father, I will catch up with him as he awakens and dissect his misery for the reader. Yes, you readers are cynical and cruel under your impassive appearance. You must have raw hearts served up to you, the quivering flesh of literary heroes; human victims are required to satisfy your voracious Sadism.

So, behold the unfortunate old man, completely exhausted by the terrible night he has just had. Under his eyes are the heavy black rings of thoughts, as if, tired of whirling round in unending circles in his brain, they had collapsed there and lain still. He strokes his grayish sandy beard with a pale, drawn hand. His eyes are rolling in their sockets; his face is congested with blood. He rings the bell.

Urbain comes in and gets the order to fetch Master Jacques in a hurry. Master Jacques must have been hovering somewhere near; he appears instantly, as if out of some trap door, pale and solemn-looking, wearing, not the lounge coat proper to this early morning hour, but a close-fitting frock-coat. There are people like that; they seem to live in a frock-coat; their gestures are staid, their manner imperturbable; their neck stiff as if it were encased in a cylinder of reinforced concrete. Of such was Monsieur Jacques Rabustel.

It is only fair to add that he is thirty-eight, being a very much earlier arrival in this world than young Simon, and that, ever since he was twenty, people have taken him to be forty. A great, lanky fellow, dull and steady, with an equal horror of tobacco and of women, with thoughts for nothing but his future. He has never given one moment's anxiety to his family.

He sat down gravely on the paternal bed, and M. Rabustel started unburdening his heavy-laden heart:

"You heard that young wretch last night? . . . You saw what he did? . . ."

"Yes, Father."

"I wonder the walls of the house didn't come down. They must be stoutly built. But your poor father . . . it is a wonder to me I have resisted such a tremendous shock at all. Why, when I cursed him, you might have thought he would have had an impulse of regret, of . . . well, I don't know . . . thrown himself at my feet and begged pardon. . . . But no, nothing. He just stood there smirking, hard in sin . . . a real Mephistopheles. . . . Eh, what's that you say?"

"Nothing, Father. I . . . I am just as put about as you are . . ."

"Now look here. You are a serious fellow, with experience of the world. Can you make out what it is that made the young fool start up in revolt like that?"

"Not the slightest idea. I cannot make it out."

"It's a mystery . . . yes, a mystery. Sheer perversity, that's what it is. . . . And he might have killed me. Did I not have some sort of a stroke yesterday?"

"Yes, Father, you had a stroke. But not yesterday; last Tuesday."

"Last Tuesday . . . ? But, what day is today?"

"Saturday morning."

So far as his enfeebled condition allowed, M. Rabustel sat up in bed with a start; a futile start, somewhat like the attempts at somersaults the perch made when he landed it high and dry during his fishing sittings on the Marne. Indignation and amazement almost choked him anew.

"Saturday morning . . . ? But then . . . this last night I spent . . ."

"Was rather a long one, Father. It lasted exactly eighty-four hours. You have had fever and been delirious. Dr. Flouque, fortunately, reassured us by reminding me that, in our family, we live to seventy-five and that there was nothing wrong with your constitution. Anyway, you seem quite out of the wood now."

"Well, I never . . . eighty-four hours . . . and without a bite of anything to eat! That young wretch . . . I'll pay him out for this. . . . Can you imagine anything like it? To leave a happy, comfortable home like ours, to carve out a career for himself, in hectic Paris. . . . Ah, well he must be mad, dangerously mad. Let us speak no more about him. Let us mention his name no more. Henceforth, you are my only son. You will make it up to me for his loss. You will be the sole object of my care . . . and, when you will have become Gisele's husband, you will have children who, I feel certain, will not have this sinister streak of running after adventures. Where is Gisele? The dear child that she is . . . fetch her, that I may give her my blessing . . ."

With the same appearance of automatic propulsion, Gisele suddenly appeared at the old man's bedside. She was fairly pretty in an insignificant way, but the fire in her eyes gave the lie to her eminently reposeful appearance. When the old man repeated for her his sentence about the children-to-be, there flashed through her eyes a streak of mischief that told her own opinion on the subject of adventure.

"And now," M. Rabustel concluded, "I am very hungry. Could you not let me have something to eat?"

As if waiting below the invisible trap door, after the fashion of Jacques and Gisele, Urbain appeared suddenly from nowhere, carrying in his brawny arms a tray laden with all manner of gastronomic marvels. Hermance, the cook, had toiled hard and not in vain, to celebrate the restoration of the master to health.

Jacques murmured: "There's some post come in the last three days. Would you like to have a look at it?"

"Letters? Oh, never mind them. . . . There could be nothing of interest anyhow at the end of June. Let me have breakfast first at any rate."

M. Rabustel was generally in uncommonly good health for all his sixty-two odd years. From time to time he would mutter a complaint about some imaginary ill, but just in order to show off before other men of his age and acquaintance, who were all declining and invalid. He had never had a real illness.

When he saw this magnificent tray resting on his knees, he promptly decided to make up for lost time. A rapid mental calculation told him that he had exactly twelve meals to make up. So he prepared to eat and drink a quantity of food equivalent to this unprecedented loss. Another man would likely have burst under the strain, but he felt quite merry and well after it.

Three hours later, completely recovered from the shock occasioned by the prodigal son's departure, he was stirring the sugar in a large cup of hot, black, strong coffee, under the admiring eyes of Jacques, who had remained at his side throughout the entire operation. He suddenly remembered the letters.

"Let me have a look," he said gaily. "I'm really curious to see if by any chance the first picture postcard from that . . ."

No, there was no picture postcard, but there was a letter instead; a real letter, feeling rather heavy in the envelope, and this made some impression on the deserted father.

"I wonder what the fugitive has to say for himself. Well, one thing . . . he has no address yet, for I see he is writing from a café . . ."

Simon's letter was as follows:

"My dear Father:

"A chap I spent the night with at the *Rat Mort* cabaret, a fellow named Blossette, a damned good chap, whose uncle is learned in the Holy Scriptures, tells me that in the parable of the Prodigal Son, not only does the father not curse the poor son who wants to live his own life, but he gives him the wherewithal by handing him over his share in the estate.

"Rather decent of the old Jew, don't you think? He just realized all he could, and gave the half to his son. I am not quite so exacting. I know what modern life is like. But I do think there is one thing you might do. That is, to let me have my share of Mother's estate, which, beloved and much revered trustee of mine, thou hast administered and enjoyed the fruits of for the past twenty years.

"I assure you this would be most helpful to me. Sort of give me a standing. I am not quite sure yet where I will pitch my tent, so you had better send the cash along to my man of business, M. Croquenaud, solicitor, 20 rue de Provence.

"Thanking you in anticipation, I pray thee accept, dear Father, the expression (that's a lot more expressive than assurance) of my filial and respectful devotion.

"Your devoted son,

"SIMON.

"P. S. I am aware Mother left 800,000 francs, so my share is 400,000. I don't think I need the whole of it at one go; send me the first half before Wednesday first (fourth of July), and the rest two months later (fourth of September).

"P. P. S. Sorry I did not trot out all this the evening I said good-bye. I completely forgot all about it. Furthermore, I had the four hundred francs in my pocket I had won at poker. But they have gone. I did not think they would have gone so quickly. But, you see, one must have a big capital to start anything. Small sums just melt away like wax at a fire.

"S."

Reading which, M. Rabustel nearly had another stroke. He appealed to his elder son.

"Have you ever heard anything like that? The abandoned wretch! Hardly out of the egg, and demands the maternal estate. But I'll settle him. Watch me writing him the toughest letter . . ."

"What precisely are you going to write to him, Father?"

"Why, that he can go to . . ."

"Don't do anything of the sort. On the contrary, you will have to act very cautiously. Simon is revolting in his attitude, but he is within his legal rights. If you were to resist, he would get his lawyer, Croquenaud, after you, and he has the reputation in Paris of being anything but easy to deal with."

"What? Do you mean . . ."

"You've got to give him his money."

"Four hundred thousand francs?"

"Yes, Father."

"Well, you are a nice one, you are . . . Simon's four hundred thousand? Why, it's years since they all went. Not a coin of them left."

"Yet I got my share . . ."

"Of course. You were eighteen when your mother died, and just came of age as the estate was settled. So I gave you yours. But it was no use Simon's money lying idle for seventeen years, so I used it . . ."

"Oh . . ."

"Well, invested it. And, unfortunately, that is just the packet I sank in that rotten Crimean Phosphates Company I have told you of so often."

"Well?"

"Well, my son, there is only one thing to be done. You must give me back the four hundred thousand francs of your share, so that I may give them to this young black-mailer. You've had the luck to keep them intact. I know you have them deposited at the Credit Lyonnais. Whereas, if I had to raise such a sum, I would have to sell the house, the furniture, the plate, and the Lord knows what else . . ."

Jacques did not appear quite convinced; at least, he did not seem to be smitten with instant joy. So M. Rabustel rose to the occasion with a word, unique in its ingenuousness:

"After all, you know, that money isn't yours. It's the money of your poor dear mother."

Then he made a gesture that signified that, after all these trials, this sordid discussion of material things seemed out of place, and he closed his eyes to indicate a desire to sleep.

Jacques withdrew from the room, walking on tiptoes.

The unfortunate thing about a phrase that is unique in its ingenuousness is the mischief it invariably brings in its train. Jacques Rabustel was a most conscientious man; to him the word "family" represented something sacrosanct, something to be worshiped beyond the ken of our modern days. Not for a moment did the thought of shirking his duty occur to him. In the solitude of his own room, he thought the matter over: "After all, it is not Father's fault that the Crimean company went smash. He invested Simon's money in it with the praiseworthy idea of increasing it so he would be able to hand over a still larger sum to his son on his coming of age. We must all stand shoulder to shoulder. The Prodigal cannot be done out of his share on pretence that we find his conduct deplorable."

He had reached this precise point in his meditations when Gisele came in, smiling, redolent of subtle perfume. She was as yet only his betrothed, but she had readily acquired a conjugal, free-and-easy manner, and she was now in the habit of entering his room without knocking.

"Oh, gracious, I hope I am not disturbing you . . ."

"Not at all, dearest. I was just thinking things over." And he told her all about it. Gisele seemed thunder-struck.

"You're not in earnest?" she stammered at last.

"Perfectly in earnest, dearest."

"Oh, come, Jacques . . . you must reflect . . . you must . . . dear me . . . why you yourself have often told me Simon was just a fool, a bottomless pit of extravagance, that he would eat up every cent of the estate in a few months . . ."

"Perfectly right, my dear. But that is no reason for withholding the estate from him. On the contrary, it will be a useful lesson to him. When he will come back

ruined and miserable, we shall be able to say to him: 'Now we don't owe you anything. Go out and learn to stand on your own feet.'"

"A lot of good that will do us!"

"The question is not whether it will do us a lot of good, the question is that we shall have done our duty. Besides, if we tried to get out of it, Lawyer Croquenaud would soon bring us back to it by forcible methods."

"Would he dare?"

"Of course he would dare."

"Yet Simon did not seem to care about all this when he left the other day."

"Because he felt four hundred francs jingling in his pocket. But since then . . ."

"Anyway, I don't see what the whole thing has to do with you. It is your father's lookout . . ."

"I have already told you, Gisele, that my father's money is locked up in various businesses from which he cannot at the moment take it out. So I must help him." And he added that phrase of which he was quite proud: "We must all stand shoulder to shoulder."

Mlle. Gorrier was struck dumb; she contemplated for a while this relic of another age with a kind of stupor. In imagination, she saw his collar and frock-coat changing into the steel armor of some mediæval knight. Then in an impulse of candor, she said to him:

"I must say you are rather daft, Jacques. Your father, despite his age, is a sight cuter. He would not do what you are doing. Besides, you can see how he is getting out of it."

He grunted. She went on, with increasing candor: "I should have thought that, on the contrary, you would have profited by Simon's departure to save the money up for him. Act as a sort of moral tutor for him, till he comes of mental age."

"No, really, Gisele, you think I'm daft? . . ."

"You may call it a white man if you choose. It comes pretty much to the same thing." And she flitted away, tripping and laughing, like a bird leaving the twig on which have rested its tiny feet. She crossed the Rabustel

land, opened a little green door in the wall separating it from that of her mother's, and, a few moments later, was pouring the whole story into that estimable lady's ears. Gisele herself seemed quite happy about it. "I'll be able to do what I like with a fool like that!"

Madame Gorrier did not share her daughter's enthusiasm.

"To be able to do what you like with a penniless fool is no great advantage, my dear. When I chose a husband for you, I knew Jacques Rabustel was an intellectual pauper, but I thought him rich in the goods of this world. But penniless . . ."

"Oh, Jacques is not yet penniless . . ."

"He soon will be if he goes on in that strain. The plain, blunt fact is that he has just thrown away eight hundred thousand francs."

"Only four hundred thousand surely . . ."

"I repeat: eight hundred thousand; first the four hundred he takes from his own account to give that mad brother of his, and secondly the four hundred I fondly thought he would have kept back from Simon's share to punish him for his escapade."

As a matter of fact, Gisele had, a quarter of an hour before, expressed this very same thought, though in different words. She looked at her mother with the admiration one always feels for a person with whom one is in telepathic relation. Yes, Jacques was undoubtedly a great baby, but she felt impelled to put in a further argument in his defense:

"The father is wealthy."

"I'm not so sure about that, my dear. I have made certain inquiries. His whole fortune is tied up in business and he has not a single loose thousand in his pocket. And what is all that business of his worth? No one knows. All that he possesses that is tangible is that miserable suburban villa of his. For all you or I know, he might be living on a small income, or even on the charity of his son."

"But what is Jacques living on, then?"

"Oh, he's a work slave, an engineer, tied down to a big industrial concern that sucks him dry. Whenever he

scrapes together a few hours of leisure, he looks after a model farm he has in the Loiret district. I have a shrewd suspicion that that is where most of his money comes from, and that the fond hope of his heart is to retire there as soon as possible. If you dote on country life, my dear, you stand an excellent chance of getting your fill of it. I can see you developing into the perfect type of a rustic dame."

"Oh, Mother! What a fate! You know I hate the country. I love dancing, dresses, races, the whole life of Paris."

"Just like Simon. He's the man you ought to have chosen."

"Simon? You are laughing at me . . ."

"Laughing perhaps, but with a strain of bitterness. The truth is, men like Simon are essential in order to prevent us poor women from dying of boredom, when we are married to such men as Jacques. And such men as Jacques are essential in order to give women the cash necessary for their amusement with men of the Simon type."

"Why, Mother, what you are saying is perfectly immoral. Do you really mean to say you think Jacques will make me rusticate on a farm and that old Rabustel will leave nothing behind?"

"Old Rabustel is an ancient rascal who is quite cute enough to have a pile hidden away somewhere that no one knows anything about. But he has a constitution of iron and will probably live another twenty years. In twenty years you will hardly want to leave your farm to come back to the sweets of the capital."

"Farm? I don't want any farm. I want a husband who will stop in Paris. Well, so much the worse for Jacques."

"Ah, my dear little girl, how pleased I am to see you so sensible. You were just running straight for an impassable gate. In my day you might still marry an honest man, perhaps; but today the thing is out of the question. I know, you will have a twinge or two, but that will wear off. You're a pretty girl, and you'll soon find the husband suited to you."

In this wise were the hopes of Mlle. Gorrier's fiancé extinguished. The rest was a matter of mere minor for-

malities. Gisele had not much experience of the world, for this was her first broken engagement. Madame Gorrer, however, was an old hand; in her youth she had had many episodes of the kind; so she took the matter in hand and sent Jacques the ring back with a short, dignified note of explanation:

"Far be it from me, Monsieur, to presume to judge the motives that may have inspired your brother's action. I have no doubt they may have been perfectly unimpeachable motives. But we belong to a family where things of this sort never happen, and, for my part, I must watch over the interests of my daughter. I hope you will not take it amiss that I am so careful. You are man of the world enough to know that, in life, there are occasions when sentiment must give way to more imperious considerations . . ."

Poor Jacques, profoundly impressed by this twaddle, reached the point where he seriously asked himself whether he had not been guilty of some offense against so scrupulously moral and honorable a family. In any case, the double fact was there: he had to give up his four hundred thousand francs, and he must also give up his fiancée. This second blow was so severe that it dulled the pain inflicted by the first. To paternal remonstrances, he summoned up courage to reply:

"Of what use is that money to me now, since I no longer have any one on whom to spend it?"

M. Rabustel was cordially of the same opinion. But, at bottom, he did not understand it at all, since, for his own part, money had always represented merely a means of satisfying his personal appetites; not only his own money, but incidentally other people's money as well.

He threw some vaguely comforting words at his son: "I am still left to you, at any rate. Paternal love is the only lasting thing in this world. There's as good fish in the water as ever came out of it. Just do as I do and take up some interest. Or devote yourself to work. Work is the great comfort-giver."

Having delivered himself of this pronouncement, he left blithely to go angle for perch in the river Marne.

No attempt will be made to bore the reader with a recital of the events that filled the life of Simon Rabustel since that memorable evening when, light-heartedly, he leaped out of the paternal window. Under whatever clime, the careers of Prodigal Sons are always the same.

No sooner had Simon touched his two hundred thousand francs, the first half of the estate, which, incidentally, M. Rabustel had addressed to Lawyer Croquenaud without any indiscreet revelations as to the part played in the affair by Jacques, than he launched an assault on that sum with so heroic a dash that he entirely demolished it within the two months he had himself fixed as the term of its duration.

To describe merely the festive nights this open-handed boy organized in the course of this fast and furious two months would require volumes. If it is true, as some anonymous contemporary philosopher has, I believe, laid down, that no price is ever too heavy to pay for the truth, Simon Rabustel acquired a lot of valuable hints for the modest sum of a trifle over three thousand francs per day.

Some of the hints were odd and precious; that somehow, women who never seem to do more than wet their lips with a glass of champagne, manage to cost the host an average of three to four bottles of extra-dry champagne per night. Also, that Biblical study, as incarnated in the ineffable Blossette, does not imply any incompatibility with festive evenings; on the contrary. Further, that poker is a subtle game, mischievous as an imp, which baits you with occasional wins of a couple of hundred and is paid for by frequent settlements of ten times as much. Finally, that Paris, which every one is agreed is empty and dead in the summer, is in reality palpitating with life.

Having duly cashed the second portion of his inheritance, Simon had no further need to learn these lessons; but he did feel the need to test whether they were of a permanent character. He devoted himself to the study of this point with the passionate enthusiasm of a scientist investigating the habits of life of some obscure insect. He was a mystical student of fast living.

He played poker quite a lot. But this expedient did not seem to have the rapidly melting effects on his fortune

which he hoped for, so he entrusted one hundred thousand francs to his friend Blossette, who was pleading for capital for an automobile undertaking, the success of which was beyond the shadow of a doubt.

He signed that cheque really to show off, just for the Neronian joy of amazing the said Blossette. And, so far, he succeeded; Blossette was amazed. After the fashion of his kind, he had asked for a hundred thousand in the vague hope of getting a thousand. A portion of the money was applied to a riotous campaign which to this day has remained historical in the annals of Montmartre under the name of "Blossette's campaign." The rest was offered by Blossette, not without qualms, to the automobile concern whose selling agent he was for one of the Paris districts. He was supposed to be that, at any rate, though the ramifications of the affair are too intricate to be told here. Whatever the reason, the money was seen no more.

In the record time of one week, Simon Rabustel found himself the possessor of four hundred francs, just the sum he had had in his pocket on the famous day when he set out in life on his own account. The thought flashed through his mind of entrusting this remnant of wealth to the little god Poker, on the principle of dust to dust and ashes to ashes. But he had his doubts. And likewise a new inspiration. As if driven by some irresistible force, he took the first train for the Riviera, landed on that feeric peninsula which a certain oceanographical museum had made world-famous, and, instead of entering the said museum itself, passed through the portals of a neighboring establishment, gaudily bedecked in gold. He went straight up to a green cloth-covered table, over which there presided a gentleman in evening dress with an ebony rake. He muttered a short funeral oration, shut his eyes and deposited on the green cloth the two hundred francs that now constituted his entire wealth.

Then he promptly left and wandered about the gardens of La Condamine, smoking his last cigarette.

He went back after a while, with a feeling of vague curiosity, and was immediately acclaimed boisterously. Animated groups were hovering round "his" table. People

looked at him curiously. An old gentleman with decayed teeth and with tears in his eyes explained to him that his two hundred francs having remained with compound interest on a number which insisted on turning up with monotonous regularity, he had become the owner of that huge pile of notes and tokens that lay there.

He threw a tip of a hundred francs to the old gentleman, picked up the pile, counted it, changed it into real portable money and left by the night express for Paris, with nine hundred thousand francs in his pocket.

It was September the first.

On the evening of September the second, M. Rabustel received from his younger son the following wire:

"Paris hotel majestic may I lunch with you tomorrow will come without awaiting reply but don't kill fatted calf affectionate greetings

"SIMON."

M. Rabustel replied at once:

"Paternal curses suspended for twenty four hours there will be cold chicken with mayonnaise"

Then he sat down and waited, with a distinct tinge of scepticism. His thoughts proceeded as follows:

"If the young scamp thinks he can impress me by dating his confounded telegram from the Majestic he is making a big mistake. And if he is staging this reconciliation stunt in order to touch my pocket, having eaten up his own fortune, he is making a still bigger mistake."

In the main, however, he was inquisitive. He wanted to know what had really happened. For three months he had had no news from his son, and at times something almost resembling faint anxiety had brushed past his hardened old heart. On the stroke of noon the next day, Simon Rabustel made his entry home, not on foot, covered with the dust of tramped roads, crushed, beaten and repentant as his father had imagined, but in a sumptuous limousine, with a negro chauffeur smiling like a jazz band conductor. Simon jumped lightly down, but his general manner and

behavior was that of a staid gentleman, sure of himself, with a trace of imperiousness about him.

The father and the elder brother were somewhat startled. But, without leaving them time to express their wonder, Simon, perfectly at his ease, kissed them and, putting one arm round the shoulder of each, exclaimed: "What about lunch? I'm confoundedly hungry."

M. Rabustel, his whole being up in arms at this amazing effrontery, was going to protest, but Simon forestalled him:

"Come, Father, let us lose no time. I have snatched a few hours to come and steep myself once more in the home atmosphere, but, alas, only for a very few hours. We business men are not our own masters."

M. Rabustel inquired feebly: "What's that?"

"I say that, however precious sentimental episodes may be to us business men, we have no time to give way to them. Please do not spoil these few moments' leisure of mine. . . . And first of all, give me all your news, while I do honor to this admirable cold chicken, which, by the way, is a lot more tasty than the traditional fatted calf. . . . Father, I declare you have positively grown younger. You hardly look forty-five. But Jacques looks very down-cast. What has happened in my absence? Heartaches, is it?"

In brief manner, Jacques told the tale of his jilting. When he had done, Simon commented: "I do hope, old man, you won't shed any more tears on that loss. The girl has condemned herself by her act. Ah, these women! One must be firm with them, otherwise they get you in leading strings, and the Lord knows whither they will lead you. . . . Women! Ah, well, if I had listened to them, I would not be where I am now. But, thank God, I have made my life without them. . . ."

"Your life, your life," exclaimed M. Rabustel. "What in fine has been your life? You have told us nothing. You have never written."

"Don't be sore. I never had a minute. Listen to me, Father, and you will understand how it was. In your day, work was an easy, almost a normal thing. You made

your money by working eight to ten hours a day. You could not do that today. . . .”

“I don’t understand. . . .”

“Simple enough. I tell you you could not do the same today. In order to get there, I mean really get there, as I have done, one must be at it morning, noon and night. You are both men of another generation; I don’t suppose you can understand after all. . . .”

For a few moments he remained silent, his eyes fixed on the ceiling, as if going over painful memories.

“My life? What’s the use of telling it to you? You would just worry needlessly. But perhaps you will get a slight idea of it when I tell you that the first two hundred thousand francs I put into business was swallowed up without my even knowing how. A blunder . . . as all beginners make. I almost gave it up. Ah, if I had not had faith in my lucky star. . . . After that I was a little more cautious, without leaving audacity out of it, however. Audacity is essential in certain kinds of business, otherwise one just drags along and vegetates, on a mere hundred thousand a year . . . what’s that? Poverty!”

“Poverty . . . a hundred thousand francs a year!”

“Well, Father, decent poverty if you like, genteel poverty, but still poverty. I have always seen things on a large scale. And I had my intuition to fall back upon. The finest stroke in my career was that Hungarian salt-mine affair; I don’t really know exactly how much it brings in. . . . But to get it, I had to take my last morsel of bread from my mouth. Intuition is a wonderful thing. I also got mixed up in other businesses of course—automobiles. That car I traveled down in is an Albatross. I am half-owner of the firm, with my friend Blossette.”

“Blossette? The cabaret haunter?”

“There are more staid people than you dream of haunt cabarets. Some evenings, when one’s head is swimming in figures, one drifts in there just to seek oblivion for a time. . . .”

“But, tell me, Simon dear, what have you actually become?”

“I have told you, Father, a business man.”

His son's successive revelations had so impressed M. Rabustel that he did not know what to say. Was this ugly duckling of his really a swan? He began to feel almost ashamed of himself, and it was with some embarrassment that he murmured:

"Then you bear me no grudge that I . . ."

"That you cursed me? Dear, no. On the contrary, you have no idea what a world of good it did me. Had you given me your benediction, you would probably have added a small allowance to it . . . some two or three thousand a month. What would have happened? I know. I should have become used to an easy, stodgy life, become a poor, timid little bourgeois. You threw me into the water, and I jolly well had to swim or go under. Well, I didn't go under. I had a fight, and I won it. So here I am. . . ."

He was stirring the sugar in his cup of coffee; there was an aroma of victory in the coffee itself.

"But it does one good to take a rest. Believe me or not as you please, but this is the first time for three months that I have had a minute's leisure."

"Three months . . ." mused M. Rabustel. "You have made a fortune in three months? Tell me, Simon dear, how much exactly is this fortune of yours? Ever totaled it up?"

"Well, I would have to reckon . . . rather a hard job. You see, I have so many affairs I throw money into. The cash comes in from one thing and I just shove it into another . . . it never rests, always working. I dare say in actual liquid money, as one might say, I have little over a million."

"A million, my son? A million in real cash?"

The Prodigal Son pretended to misunderstand his father's meaning; very modestly, he added: "Well, you know, I don't like having too much lying about idle. And I simply love having the stuff working. . . ."

The next day saw a very empty house. In that one short afternoon, Simon had succeeded in livening it up more than it had ever been in the ten years M. Rabustel had owned it. He was gay, affable, distilling around him an atmosphere of success, full of light and shade. And

his prestige! In the servants' quarters, Hortense and Urbain did not stop their exclamations of wonder. Whoever would have thought it of their frivolous, mischievous young master?

At dinner that night, father and son were both very silent. They had nothing to say to each other. Jacques was particularly discouraged. Simon's triumph was like a defiance thrown at himself, at his moral conduct, his principles, all the ideas on which he had built his life. His future depended on this manufacture of chemical manure where he worked. Suppose farmers ceased buying that manure, where would he be? Jobless, forced to take refuge on his Loiret farm, one of the defeated in the battle of life.

What was it Simon had had in addition to his own advantages? Luck, just luck. After all, Simon was only a child, a baby, devoid of judgment or cleverness, or patience, or any kind of technical knowledge.

As for M. Rabustel, he was bored. It was probably not the first time. Perhaps he had always been bored, without knowing it. He lived with his boredom as with some sick organ, so gently and slightly sick that the patient does not notice it is sick at all. Today he was suddenly faced with the fact that he was bored. It was a painful revelation.

He threw his napkin on the table with a gesture of impatience and went upstairs to his room. But not to bed. The whole night long he sat at his desk, adding up rows of figures, chewing his bitter thoughts.

He, too, mentally reviewed his life. But, contrary to Jacques, he dug out of Simon's visit, not discouragement, but a new, priceless, hitherto unknown energy.

About four in the morning he rose from his chair and walked up and down the room, beating his breast. "Yes, I, Casimir Rabustel, at the age of sixty-two, I have discovered Truth. And Simon, despised Simon, it is who has revealed to me the Truth. I was a fool to have condemned thus hastily a boy in whose head so brilliant a future was bubbling up. . . . All my life long I have been prudent, feeling my way, groping about like a blind man, taking fright like a hare. . . . I took such precautions

on embarking on any piece of business proposed to me, that, before I could make up my mind to take the plunge, some one else had stepped in and snapped up the lion's share. And thus my fortune, which is reputed to be great, which I thought was great, is nothing in comparison to what it might have been if I had had confidence in myself. Simon is right. Audacity is required. Everything lies there. . . . When it was a question of his buying that salt mine, he did not stop to think whether there was any money to pay the price with, nor whether the mine contained any salt. He trusted in his star. He found the cash. The mine may have been empty before, who knows? But by some miracle it filled up with salt. Lucky Simon!

"And to think that the lad is my son. . . . There's something in blood after all. It tells. But now Big Business has shown me its fascinating side. I have always loved gold; but I have loved it timidly, almost shamefacedly. I have loved it to hide it, to store it up, like a poor little bourgeois. Now I love it after the manner of a *grand seigneur*, for the joys, the thrills it gives. Almost I envy Simon. Yet, no . . . that were an unworthy sentiment. I have nothing to regret really. I shall have had two periods of youth: that of my twenties, and that I have just uncovered. And the latter is much the finer of the two. . . .

"Hallo, it is day already and the birds are twittering in the trees. A long time since I ever remained up so late. But why think about it, when I know my son so often was not able to get to bed at all? Ah, how I have misjudged him. . . ."

He contemplated for a moment going out to the river to fish for perch. There was a tempting aroma of early morn coming in through the open window. But, on second thoughts, he decided to go to bed, and he slept like a top till midday.

The next day, without saying a word to anybody, he took the train for Paris. He did not know very well where he was going nor why he was going there. Like most people who dream of a "new life," he had only confused visions of what this new life might consist of.

Seated in his first-class compartment, he stroked his beard with his well manicured hand, and an enigmatical smile hovered about his lips. He was thinking, amongst other things, of the face his elder son would make when he would read the letter he had left for him on the hall table:

"My dear Jacques,

"Excuse me leaving here without having explained to you the reasons which drive me, in fine weather, to leave this house I love so much and from which no pressure of business has ever succeeded in luring me before October 15. The motive in my mind is a powerful one.

"I will reveal it to you sometime, but not now. Excuse this delay, but the plans I have made necessitate some secrecy. Later on I will gladly tell you all about it, and then, perhaps, the revelation will increase the esteem and admiration you have for

"Your devoted and affectionate father

"CASIMIR.

"P.S. Just watch over things at home till I return, but do not forward my letters till further notice."

Poor Jacques! He did "make a face" when he read this extraordinary letter. He positively tortured his imagination to guess what strange forces could have driven this most staid and orderly of men, this placid Marne angler, to take this step. There was little chance of his finding that out, for the person chiefly concerned did not know himself.

One single thing remained rockfirm in the shifting sands of Monsieur Rabustel's thoughts: he would see his son. He would see him immediately. Why he should see him was not very clear. But he did want to see him again, to try to fathom this phenomenon whose father he was.

So he got the man to drive him to the Hotel Majestic, where the young man lived. As soon as he gave his name, the porters, the elevator boys, people well accustomed to handling the great ones of the world, put on a smile of

appreciation of the visitor's status. Simon was living in the caravanseraï's most splendid suite, and he lived well. Monsieur Rabustel was actually dazzled. An Indian Rajah could not have received him with greater style. And what ease, what grace, what *chic*! Casimir felt a kind of deep pride welling up that it was he who had fathered this phoenix among men.

"Hallo, Father!" exclaimed Simon, rushing to meet him. "Come, sit down in this nice, deep, soft armchair and rest yourself for a few minutes. I must apologize for having to receive you in hired rooms. But, would you believe it? I have not had time to look for a flat or a house. I run here and there, always busy, always on the way, worried night and day . . . besides I don't know that a house would really be a good solution after all. What we business men need is just a *pied-à-terre*. . . . How do you find this little place?"

"Sumptuous, my boy, sumptuous."

"Jolly decent of you to say so. Well, it isn't bad. Of course, I daresay one might get better, but it's not bad. And, above all, it's handy. I couldn't be bothered managing servants, and here I get served automatically. Then, if some day I don't want to go out, I can spend all my time in here . . . there's the barber and the swimming pool, the bar, the dancing, even the little girl who sells fashionable knick-knacks. It's just like on an Atlantic steamer."

The telephone bell rang and Simon rushed to the instrument.

"Hallo, hallo . . . yes . . . is that you? Thanks, quite well . . . you wish to see me? Very important? . . . well, well, I'll consider it . . . at the Carlton Bar? If you like . . . as well there as anywhere else . . . What's that? You would rather come here? No, no . . . that's out of the question, quite."

And he hooked up the receiver impatiently.

"They're a damned nuisance, these wom . . . I mean, all these people. Since I went into this Albatross business I don't know what's the matter with them. Yet it's a small thing. But anything that touches automobiles gets them crazy."

"You are going to this appointment?"

"Of course. You see, one never knows. This is a man I know very slightly, but he might have something interesting to put before me."

"In a saloon bar?"

"Why not? It's as good an Exchange as any other, in a pleasant setting. The only annoying thing about it, this fool is going to take me away from you earlier than I had hoped. . . . Father, Father, you have no idea . . . you saw me the other day in quite exceptional circumstances, when I actually had eight hours to play. That hardly ever happens to me."

"I am sorry . . ."

"Did you have anything particular to say to me?"

"No . . . that is, nothing awfully particular. I . . . I, well I just wanted to see you, shake hands, you know, and that sort of thing. But I did think you might have a couple of hours to chat. . . ."

"Chat? a couple of hours? Good gracious! One sees you're just an old-fashioned chap. Listen, Father, are you staying some days in town?"

"I don't know . . . I have no definite plans. . . ."

"Well, you can at least stay till tomorrow. Good . . . then, this is what I propose." He took out a small notebook and studied it with puckered brow. "At half-past four, here, with Miss Johnson, the Chicago chewing-gum woman, you know, the big firm, Partner & Sons. At quarter to six, I must see Blossette at Weber's. Then at seven, this chap in the Carlton. At half-past eight I'll snatch a bite of dinner here, in the grillroom; at half-past nine I must get into dress clothes to go to . . . well to that damned fool . . . I'll explain all about it. The thing is, I won't be free till midnight. We might have supper then together. What do you say to supper?"

"Delighted."

"Poor old Father . . . I must warn you of one thing. I, of course, am a staid, serious chap. But some of the people I mix with are queer. Blossette has a way of dragging in cronies of his . . . female cronies. Just never mind them. While they play the fool, we'll have a good chat."

"On the contrary, that will amuse me. I find this up-to-date way of transacting business so refreshing!"

"All right then, that's a go. We'll sup together, at midnight, at the *Rat Mort*. Just ask for Mr. Simon's table if I'm a bit late. And now, excuse me if I drive you off. But Miss Johnson might be here any minute . . ."

"Nice-looking girl?"

"Not bad."

"Young?"

"Well, you know, they start work young in the States. At twenty-two, this girl has established herself; her firm can't do without her. In France, of course, it's all different. . . ."

"But you are only twenty-one yourself. . . ."

"Ah, well, that's another matter altogether, Father. After all, I am your son."

With which delicate compliment, Simon dismissed his parent, then made one dash to the folding doors leading to his room and greeted a young woman, very blonde, very elegant, very much perfumed. Simon held up a warning finger:

"I told you you were never to rout me out here, my dear Muriel. You see what's happened. My father burst in on me and I had to shut you in."

"That your dad, that distinguished old gentleman I saw through the keyhole?" inquired the young woman with a strong American accent. "But he's awfully smart; I've quite taken a fancy to him. He's a dash smarter than you, Sime. Quite gentleman-like. . . ."

Simon laughed. "He would be flattered if he knew how rapidly he had conquered your good graces. I have told him about you."

"Told him about me?"

"Gave him your real name: Johnson. Gave him your real age: twenty-two. And added I had a date with you for half-past four."

"How imprudent . . ."

"Not in the least. Of course, I told him you were travelling for Partner & Sons, chewing gum, you know. . . ."

"Chewing gum? Horrors!"

"Better chewing gum than a bad reputation; I saved yours, my dear."

"Who rang you up a while ago?"

"Oh, some damn fool. . . ."

"In petticoats, I suppose. . . ."

"Listen to me, Muriel. Your jealousy is getting to be the limit. I'm away . . ."

"Don't be nasty . . ."

• "I'm not nasty, just in a hurry."

"But when will I see you? I wanted to . . . What are you doing tonight?"

"Supping at the *Rat Mort* with Father. Why, that's a notion. Will you come too? You seem to have taken a liking to him. But, please don't make any bloomers; you're not a dancer, never seen the Olympia or Daunou's. You're Partner & Sons' representative in France, chewing gum. Fixed salary, thousand francs a month. That's the condition on which I invite you."

"It's a bargain."

They kissed each other, just a fraternal peck, for theirs was a very shallow sort of flirtation. Then they went downstairs and separated in front of the hotel. Simon meandered about the streets for a while and might have been seen in the Carlton Bar at seven, transacting business of unusual importance, to judge by his animated way of talking to this "damned fool" he had mentioned to Monsieur Rabustel. In point of fact, it was a very dark female, dark as night with sparkling eyes and positively loaded with gems. But his business ability was seemingly as nothing compared to that of his companion, for after an hour's discussion she got him to take her to dinner at a leading restaurant in the rue Royale.

When M. Casimir Rabustel penetrated the sanctums of the *Rat Mort* at exactly midnight—for he was extremely proud of his punctuality—he was immediately received by an extremely polite and deferential head waiter, who announced to him confidentially:

"M. Simon hasn't come back yet. But they told us you were coming. There's a gentleman waiting for you."

Casimir was much surprised. Some one was waiting for

him. On thinking it over, he was flattered after the manner of all true princes. When the king is not ready to receive in audience, he sends an ambassador to make his excuses.

In reality, the ambassador was none other than the famous Blossette whom we are happy to present still alive to our readers. Blossette's influence on Simon was a most important one. Except for his knowledge of biblical history, Robert Blossette showed few signs of genius. Of ruddy complexion, a little nose hidden by massive cheeks, and bright eyes which shone through horn-rimmed glasses, he had the air rather of a waster than of the reflex of the great scientist. He had a brusque manner of speaking and got to the bottom of things as soon as possible:

"You'll pardon me, Sir, if I introduce myself; Robert Blossette. Your son has certainly spoken to you of me. He can't be here for a quarter of an hour yet. He is so busy . . ."

"I know, Monsieur," acquiesced Casimir.

"Not at all. I must also excuse myself for lack of tact which I showed. Nevertheless, I am sort of mixed up in your affairs."

"Yes, I know. You advised him to try to obtain his heritage on his mother's side. But, Sir, on the contrary, I am delighted. This money has enabled him to go up a step on the ladder . . ."

"Which has brought him to the pinnacle of his fortune. Ah, that is a feat. However, if I dared pat myself on the back, I would say that I had quite a bit to do with kindling the spark in Simon. He didn't appreciate his great capabilities. I, on the contrary, am accustomed to appreciate these qualities."

"That must be rather an agreeable profession?"

"You haven't any idea. It becomes a passion. But nevertheless, one never loses one's head. One plods, plods on without hesitating. It's like an opium dream, without the depression which follows on awakening from the latter."

The two men became much interested in their conversation and when Simon came along, half an hour later, Casimir and Robert had become fast friends.

The young man was not alone. He had brought two other people with him; a tall, pallid chap with an eagle-like nose and thin lips, and a young woman whom our readers will recognize instantly as the charming Miss Johnson.

He introduced them immediately to his father:

"Miss Muriel Johnson of whom I have already spoken. A remarkable woman. In ten years she will be the Queen of Chewing Gum. M. Nicolas Belckrikll, but we call him Commodore for short. He's an oil magnate."

M. Rabustel was in the seventh heaven. These remarkable people, so clever and distinguished, were moreover fond of good living, gay, agreeable, and dressed in the latest fashion. How strange life was! In his time, one did business in drab offices or restaurants where one consumed heavy meals with rich sauces, and always between men of a certain age. Never any women. Nowadays, youth took an active part. And it retained its characteristic illusions. How he regretted not to have this happy age once more.

Simon felt a short speech necessary, however, in order to commence things smoothly.

"Gentlemen," he said, "and Miss Johnson, we have worked so much today that I think we have earned a rest. I propose a truce."

"I am all for the truce," replied the Commodore, filling up two glasses with champagne.

"Cheers for the truce," encouraged Blossette. "But of course, if we think of anything during the armistice, we can talk about it."

So saying, he drew a small pad of paper from his pocket and placed it on the table.

"Take care, Robert," warned Simon, "you overwork. Some day the machine will crack."

"One should not exaggerate," advised Casimir with a paternal air.

"What can you do about it?" added Muriel.

"What we need is some women," declared the Commodore suddenly.

"What," cried Simon, "but there is Miss . . ."

"It doesn't matter. We ought to have a girl for every man. Monsieur (pointing to Casimir) is already supplied but we . . ."

M. Rabustel smiled with satisfaction. Miss Johnson had indeed seated herself at his side as if she enjoyed it. She seemed to proclaim "I have chosen my cavalier for the evening." And while the others spent their time with dancing girls, Casimir and the young American girl launched into an animated and apparently confidential conversation.

What they said during this eventful night will never be known. Nothing is so wonderful as the first unison of two kindred spirits, all the more delicate and touching when these spirits come from afar. All that we know certainly is that at the end of an hour, the pair appeared to whisper about something very interesting and Muriel caressed Casimir's beard sweetly with her white hand.

One heard: "Oh, if you would! Oh, if you would! It would be so nice!"

At the end of an hour, Simon's guests seemed to have become children once more. They threw little cotton balls and serpent-like reams of paper, crying or joking with their neighbors whom they did not know as if it were their habit, every day. Sometimes they even got up to dance. They drank as much as they could. It was the Commodore who drank the most. What a fellow! He had already gotten away with four bottles of champagne and he was preparing to attack the fifth when unconsciousness overtook him and he slipped noiselessly under the table. One could see him sink down farther and farther like a ship about to disappear in the sea. When only his head could be seen, he cried out "*Tu quoque fili,*" regarding the last bottle with longing. Then he disappeared from view completely.

Every one would have rushed to his aid. Unfortunately, however, an unusual disturbance distracted the attention of all in the *Rat Mort*. A young woman dark as night, with bright eyes, entered the room brusquely. She wore at least five hundred francs of jewels and whirled into the room so rapidly that she upset two couples; a waiter with

a dozen oysters and an old flowerwoman were two more victims of her arrival. She went directly to the table where Simon was seated. Armed with a switch, she began to deal blows to all the bottles she could see, crying in a shrill voice:

"Scoundrel! Scoundrel! I know why you didn't want to tell me where you were going tonight! But I have found you here! If you think you can get away with that! And that confounded American girl."

She wanted to fall upon her Simon's neighbor, whom she took for Muriel Johnson but who in reality was only a poor dancing girl, who could not understand what it was all about.

"I know what is the matter with you, my dear," remonstrated Simon, "we aren't here for fun. It is a business dinner. There is only one American girl and you see she is in conversation with my father. Come, don't be angry. One can't talk seriously. Come join us. It will be much better. But first let me introduce you to my father who hasn't had the honor of meeting you as yet."

Getting up gravely and a little solemnly, he said: "Papa, let me present Mme. de Sainte Honorine, our best advertising solicitor."

M. Rabustel, who was absent-minded for reasons best known to him, replied politely, offering his hand to the young girl:

"Delighted. I see that we are among serious business people."

Then he returned to Miss Johnson's side while Muriel repeated the same operation as before, that is, caressed Casimir's beard, murmuring this time:

"It would make me so happy. If you only knew."

M. Rabustel got up, left the table, and took his general manager aside. The latter seemed astonished at first but then seemed to admit the feasibility of what M. Rabustel proposed. A few minutes later, Casimir returned to the table. He still had his beard but it was in his hand, carefully wrapped up in a silken rose handkerchief which he handed solemnly to Miss Johnson:

"Medea," he declared, "I bring you the Golden Fleece."

Then, approaching her, he seated himself, whispering: "Don't you think I look like an English lord now?"

There was a moment of silence. Every one regarded this strange face which seemed ten years younger. Some applauded. Others made fun of Casimir. As for Muriel Johnson, she doubled with laughter, crying, "I have destroyed my ideal. I have destroyed my ideal."

The music ceased. The momentary silence was so strange that it caused even the Commodore to awake from his profound slumber.

In a lugubrious voice, he moaned, "The admiral. I'm gone. It is the admiral."

This time, he lapsed into a definite coma.

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"I don't know how it happens but everything . . . Really the day before yesterday evening without . . ."

"Don't speak ill of the day before yesterday evening. It has been an eventful year. You made the acquaintance of the brainiest American business woman and I think you have already discussed something rather interesting with her. At least you are now in fashion. You look like an intelligent Anglo-Saxon of some thirty-odd years."

"That's true."

There was a moment's silence. M. Rabustel thought over complacently the events of the past two days. While regarding the beautifully appointed salon in the Hotel Majestic where he had been able to obtain an audience with that important person who was his son, M. Rabustel rubbed his hand frequently over his chin, delighted to discover that it was in place. He thought about Miss Johnson and her kindness in accepting a few shares in Partner's Chewing Gum. But that was little in comparison with the more important dreams of M. Rabustel.

Simon offered a cigar to his father and as soon as he had begun to smoke, began:

"Well, Papa, now I shall listen to you. What would you like me to say?"

"It's very simple. I want to return to an active life. I feel as though I have not said my last word yet, at least

not to have finished it. There is a new existence before me. I want, I want to imitate you."

"What?"

"By going into big business also."

"It's a good idea. I approve of it, but where are you going to begin?"

"But you began like that, yourself, with a bit of nerve. Only at first I should like to be guided a bit. Couldn't you aid me at first? I have had enough of sure things. I want to feel myself rich, rich like you. You don't refuse?"

"Certainly not. But I have a conscience. You say that you see business in the same light as I. Could you, however, come through a serious reverse without flinching?"

"Yes, yes. I am certain. Couldn't I buy stock in some of the companies which you have organized?"

"The majority are already entirely subscribed."

"What can I do then?"

At this query, Simon paused. He seemed to be engaged in deep thought, his brows wrinkled, tapping his forehead with his fingers from time to time as if to say "Come, come. Let's think." Suddenly Simon arose, went over to a violet wood desk, so dainty that it might well have been reserved solely for love letters.

M. Rabustel breathed deeply. Simon bit his lips, wrinkling still more his eyebrows as if he were awaiting some wandering idea. This time, it came.

"It is as I feared, dear Father. Everything is taken and it may be several months at this season before some one proposes another affair like this one to me."

"Then?"

"But just to show you that I don't bear you any ill-will, here's what I propose; I will withdraw my own capital from several of the best affairs and substitute yours."

"But you will lose by that."

"It doesn't matter. We'll soon catch up again."

Casimir was in ecstasy. He threw his arms around his son. It was pitiful to see him, so strong was his sense of obligation to his son. "Simon, you are a wonder," he said.

One week later, M. Casimir Rabustel, having paid a few small debts, gave his son fifteen hundred thousand francs,

divided as follows: For the Hungarian mining concession, eight hundred thousand; four hundred thousand francs for the Albatross, which is managed by Blossette; and three hundred thousand francs for Honduras oil fields."

It is not with impunity that one rests in Paris. Casimir did not want to return to his home in the suburbs. He thought of Muriel Johnson, the great American business woman. Before leaving for her dry land, she also wanted to see as much of Paris night life as possible. As for Muriel, Casimir seemed to her the only cultivated man whom she had met.

It was now October. Casimir was taking dancing lessons. The rue Caumartin was filled with jazz bands which stopped neither day nor night.

Meanwhile, the father and son had lost sight of the serious side of business. While waiting for the profits which were to be discounted Simon looked after his other business. There was, for instance, Partner's Chewing Gum. This pleased Miss Johnson very much, who immediately bought a pearl necklace and a few oriental costumes.

It was at this time that Simon Rabustel's star was at its crest. Wherever he went, he was surrounded by men and women who always had some wonderful affair to propose to him. Frequently, he gave them money and advice.

He counted his money only in thousand-franc notes. This was characteristic of his lofty conception of life, which was encouraged by Mme. St. Honorine. She also seemed to take the greatest pleasure in little extravagances. There was a sort of rivalry between her and Muriel Johnson so that when Muriel had a zibeline fur, Clo demanded immediately a chinchilla, and vice versa. The two men outdid themselves in purchasing lavish gifts of jewelry for their friends.

There was some one else, however, who was not pleased with this turn of affairs—Jacques, who had been forgotten and abandoned. Although he continued to occupy the same apartment with his father on the Avenue Victor Hugo, they did not keep the same hours. When he went out in the morning, Casimir had just gone to sleep. When Jacques retired, his father had just gone out. At noon,

sometimes, they saw each other. On these occasions, the old man would reply in a haughty voice to the timid remonstrances of Jacques.

Jacques, much worried, asked the advice of the family notary. The latter informed him that M. Casimir Rabustel had withdrawn his entire fortune in order to speculate with it.

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There are in life certain summits one can never attain. It isn't a question of capacity or cleverness. It is purely a matter of fate; as for example, M. Rabustel and the fox trot. After his first lesson, he was certain that it would not be long before he gave his son lessons in this art. Returning to the Majestic, filled with self-confidence, he was greeted by his son rather ostentatiously:

"I am listening," said Casimir in the amiable tone of a man who has dined well.

"You remember the promises we made each other at the *Rat Mort*."

"Yes."

"I told you that in the case of important affairs, one must be always ready for a set-back."

"The moment has come to show your courage."

"The money which you gave me . . ."

"Well, speak."

"I think you have understood."

"Oh, my God!"

M. Rabustel, fearing a congestion of the brain, tore open his collar.

"That's what I was afraid of, Papa, a nothing excites you."

"Nothing? My entire fortune is involved."

"What! Your entire fortune? Fifteen hundred thousand, your entire fortune?"

"You thought I was richer? But tell me . . ."

"There is nothing to say."

"Were they not good investments?"

"Yes, certainly; they were good but became bad."

"And my salt mine?"

"Empty, absolutely empty. When I bought it, there was a large vein. Now there's nothing at all."

"And the Albatross, the famous automobile firm?"

"I was taken in by Blossette. There was never anything except a dozen of automobiles in circulation."

"You must have him arrested."

"Oh, he has spent all of it. But that is not the worst of it. In Honduras, you know, there are very often volcanoes. The eruption was just on our property and we have had to pay heavy damages."

"But your *sang-froid*. You have your million and a half which you took out of your investments to give me a chance."

"No, it's gone in other investments, also. Why, Father, I thought you could aid me. Let's not talk any more. Tie your necktie and don't make me feel any worse than I do. I must think clearly."

"But I lose fifteen hundred thousand," sobbed the old man.

"What is that beside my losses? I lose not only ten millions but the confidence of my backers; who will never believe that three companies could disappear at the same time. I have lost everything, everything."

And without reason, he began to laugh bitterly.

Casimir got up. "Pardon me," he said.

He went to see Miss Muriel Johnson but she informed him that beggars should wear long beards and sent him about his business.

Left alone, Simon struggled with himself. He left the Majestic for a third-rate hotel. Little by little he sold all his jewels, his auto, and even a part of the wardrobe of Clo. He always managed to keep a smile, however. This could not be said of his father who haunted the outside of the night restaurants, hoping against hope for a return to better days.

Simon got deeper and deeper into the mire. All his efforts to get a stable situation fell through. In rapid succession he tried his hand at professional dancing, giving

French conversation lessons to Australian ladies visiting Paris, shop walker and taxi driver. He gave them all up, one after another.

One day, very much against the grain, he decided to sell his gold cigarette case, his talisman. They offered him four hundred francs for it.

The price sent a flash through his memory cells . . . four hundred francs . . . why, that was the fateful sum! Fate must be obeyed. He went without dinner, jumped into the express for Monte Carlo, and, the next day, was at the tables. He put the lot on the number nine. The little ball spun and went home in the cipher.

EPILOGUE

Three months later, Jacques Rabustel, who had finally retired on his farm in the Loiret, with his old father, who had become rather peevish, received the following letter:

“Barbacona, State of Minas Geraes,
“Brazil.

“My dear Jacques,

“During a business trip I took last spring on the Azure Coast, I met, in the Monte Carlo gardens, a perfectly delicious girl. She was touched by the tale of my troubles and, being of a romantic disposition, offered me her hand and her heart.

“You know the heart of man; pity is the highway to love. I, too, became attached to the child, and, when she proposed that I should become her husband, I accepted.

“She took me with her to her own country. I live with her and her family in a marvelous *fazenda*, in one of the finest bits of country in the world. There are coffee plantations, cigars, scrumptious cakes, great avenues of palm trees to shelter from the sun the oxen that draw the carts, sambas and other dances nightly; in short, nothing is lacking to perfect bliss.

“I will never return to France again.

“I do not suggest to you my sending for Father, for I fear he would feel the journey too much for him. He was

getting a bit soft when I last saw him. Crossing the Atlantic would send him off altogether, and I should fear my wife and her parents might pack both of us by the next boat back to Europe.

"So it is better you should go on keeping him. Besides, you are used to it by this time. Still, it is only right I should contribute to his upkeep, so to this end I will send you a monthly sum of ten thousand milreis.

"Give him a hug from me and believe me

"Ever your devoted brother,

"SIMON."

Monsieur Rabustel, seeing his son reading a letter, fluttered round him like a little child, demanding to know the contents. In brief words, Jacques told him about Simon's happy adventure, and Monsieur Rabustel was quite dazed with it all. He was delighted to think his younger son had once more raised himself in this way, but what touched him most was the young fellow's generosity: "Ten thousand milreis a month," he muttered, with tears in his eyes. "Ten thousand reis . . . I am well repaid for all my worry!"

I BURN MOSCOW

By PAUL MORAND

(From "*Je Brule Moscou*")

I WAS about to receive a reward, a real recompense, which was the sweeter because it was wholly unmerited. In other words, I was in the act of keeping a rendezvous with a lady. I gave a push to the huge double door, greasy with finger marks, admitting to the house where Vasilissa Abramovna lived. I had no fear whatever of the concierge, who, modern lord in France, serves to play an important part in the comedy of apartment houses but does not exist in Russia. I was therefore free to grope my way up the nine flights which yet separated me from Vasilissa. The nine flights gave me quite a journey. The stairway was like all Russian stairways are since apartment houses have been nationalized. That is to say, it had not been swept since October, 1917. The windows giving upon it were so dirty that it was, at noon, as dark as at midnight. My feet were dragged down by my heavy overshoes, even as my conscience was surcharged by the thirteen hundred sins which, the casuists say, a man may commit. My heart could never beat for Vasilissa as it did for those steps in the Russian staircase.

Vasilissa was one of the most prominent ladies of Moscow, a city where every one usually does his best to avoid prominence. From the very moment of my arrival, every effort had been made to cause me to fall in love with her and with no other woman. I yielded to these efforts, just as I had obeyed other urgent demands. Every country and every day have special gifts for him who knows how to accept, unquestioning, the things which they have to offer.

Vasilissa Abramovna, locally proclaimed a strange woman, was really quite the opposite. Who is not detracted from, rather than glorified, when considered too

fully an idol of the great public? Not that she renounced strange behavior, by any means. In Moscow, as everywhere else, certain ladies love best the very things which are least becoming to them. But this lady's strangeness had no effrontery in it. She fully effaced herself in respect for the Spartan austerity which was in the air. I had expected a highly colored personage, and the disillusion I experienced was delightful. Events in Russia seemed to her those neither of an apotheosis nor of a gangrene and, to those who sought her society, she continued to display her native gifts of primitive suppleness and docility. She was no modern person. Her quality of remaining unmodernized seemed to me peculiarly precious, in these troublous times. In fact, it was this very quality which made her a "national treasure," a specimen of art which might be adored but which must remain in the keeping of the public. I took pleasure in the thought that, as with any celebrated singer or famous dancer, the proletariat would permit Vasilissa to leave Russia without giving hostages to guarantee her return.

I first became acquainted with her at the races of the Grand Red Derby. Not that I first saw her there. Winter meetings of this sort occurring at Moscow usually continue well into the night and do not close until the city's lamps are lit, for it is very difficult to make the lazy Muscovite sportsmen leave bed before early in the afternoon. The starter had just signaled the finish with his lantern, as a conductor starts his train, and a flock as of frightened crows got immediately under way. The electric lamps revealed only an immaculate track. In the sky, heavy clouds, like lumps of pastry, floated across the moon. The frozen ground was thawing. In a ceaseless maze of wheels (for these were flat races), of stove smoke, of snow, of mud and of cries, the winning jockeys were already emerging, urging on their horses, whose shoes spattered in ice water.

As I have suggested, I placed blind confidence in the gracious intermediary who presented me to Vasilissa. His name was Ivan Moussine. I immediately christened him Master of the Red Graces. He was a rare old diplomat of the former régime. At the very sight of him one was

inevitably charmed with his honest face, elaborate manner and marvelous fancy uniform of the Red army, whose usefulness was more than welcomed when it chanced in the way of the newcomer. It was thus in full dependence upon his word, and with no chance of taking stock for myself, that I greeted the mattress tied in the middle, standing motionless in felt boots bearing fur in front, wearing a hermetically sealed leather helmet, and tied about the neck with a scarf, which erected itself before me at the grand-stand that night and which was none other than Vasilissa Abramovna.

I could be honest with myself only two days later, at the Baumberg theater. In fact, where can one be really sincere, if not at a front-line theater? The place was crowded with men in sweaters, khaki shirts and black neckties, the women in somber shirtwaists. All these faces, either bony and pierced with shadows or rounded and of greenish hue, seemed those of Rembrandt's creations, liberated from the Hermitage for the benefit of the October days.

It was a first night. I recognized Vasilissa Abramovna's box by her perfume, which was merely a simple vanilla in flavor. She presented me to other guests. There was a little girl whose curls were tied with red ribbon, a feminine general of the Caucasian Pioneers; a "gentleman from Paris," who, armed with a letter from Anatole France, was selling tractors to the countrymen; a fellow with shaven head; and a Mongolian officer clad in black oilcloth, who had just resigned from the service of the late powers to enter the popular party, and whose hair had now grown out to a length of two inches. I was placed opposite Vasilissa and so had a good chance to study her while she was explaining to me what I had missed of the new play which was no other, I observed, than "*Camille*" (*la Dame aux Camélias*). She was so indolent that she seemed to be lying down when she was erect. As with some of her African prototypes, the Hebrew blood in her was revealed rather by her figure than her features. Although she called herself a communist and could recite her catechism glibly on occasion, her pink skin betrayed few convictions of a

political variety. She was of so ordinary a type that any man might think he had met her. She doubtless owed to this very fact the indulgence and sympathy which she inspired.

The stage presented several levels and, by stairs outside, the actors, with bleeding cheeks and eyes darkened with kohl, ran from one level to another, acting and shouting in a frenzy, and all yelling at once. Plunged under a golden cupola beneath an arcade sat, like a figure from a mosaic, a pianist, accompanying the more pathetic parts of the play with a great deal of noise. Her part of the show must have been designed to permit the play to close early. However, the action continually took on new life. Father Duval, to console himself for his son's extravagances, suddenly made up his mind to pay the negroes of Africa a visit, and entered Timbuctoo to the music of a wild fantasia. I was quite ready to give evidence of amusement, but, for the first time, I noticed something which has struck me many times since in the new Russia. Nobody laughed. This strange fact imparted a queer uneasiness, not devoid of grandeur, to crowds assembled in theaters, in the streets, or anywhere else.

The play very soon reached the limit of expressiveness. The playwright, the actors, and every one else had made themselves as ugly as possible, the result being a combined nightmare and fairy-tale. A donkey entered Marguerite Gautier's chamber and ate the flowers on the death-bed. Driven off by Armand Duval, the donkey rushed away into the pianist's arcade and began to nibble her hair. The show reached its fifth hour without stopping for a single moment. At its close, Vasilissa Abramovna said good-night, declined an invitation to have a cup of tea in the director's office in honor of the author, young Mr. Koenigsberg, and, accompanied by a communist friend who was mute but visibly in love, we quitted the theater.

It was freezing cold that night. I suggested that we take one of those American automobiles, salvaged from the loot of Mourmansk and which cost a fortune. But, doubtless to avoid attracting attention to conspicuous extravagance—how can one any longer recognize the Russians?—

Vasilissa preferred to go home afoot. We gave her each an arm.

We were tramping amid dirty snow which had become a thick, yellow, frozen dust. The coffee-colored powder covered the streets as far as Red Square. Against gay modern barracks, showing domination of the Ivans by the Romanoffs, or contrasted with the gilded bulbs and green porcelain of the belfries, lit from below as actors are by the footlights, stood out the bicornate ramparts, the watch-towers, and the pinnacles of the Lombard-style enclosure of the Kremlin. Dominating this Italian acropolis, a flag, illuminated from below with light whose source was invisible, thrust into the night its theatrical and silent tongue of scarlet. We were now passing beyond the mausoleum, draped with the red dear to Lenine, whose photograph, enlarged to a height of six yards, was affixed to the wall. On each side of the entrance to the tomb two soldiers were keeping guard, motionless and straight as the frozen sturgeon displayed on the counters of the markets.

Proud of my new gray astrakhan cap, which gave me the air of a Nepman, or profiteer, I suggested that we visit the gypsy quarter. My companions begged me to speak low, turning to see whether we were being followed. They rejected my suggestion, the hour being late and the streets of the gypsy quarter dangerous. When I insisted on having something to eat, for though there are meals in Russia there are no regular meal hours, the black-shirted comrade with us was seized with panic. His apostle face vanished and his hangman's eyes appeared. For a *pure Red*—a modern Templar—must on no account be seen, especially in the company of women or foreigners, in the cafés, and the censorship forbids even the word "fox-trot," which is a synonym in Russia for western and capitalistic debauchery.

Our companion hastily fled away, his stuffed portfolio beneath his arm. A prospect as of eternal happiness was materially altering the sentiments of us two who were thus forsaken. One appetite of mine was replaced by another. I took Vasilissa home all by myself. We hailed a sleigh. Beneath the heavy furs, my knee encountered hers. Be-

hind the blue back of the driver I slipped my hand around her waist. Without noise or light we glided upon the ice-covered snow, which crackled beneath our runners like a frosted cake. Every one has read that going home in a troika, at night, and with a Russian woman, is a divine experience. Alas, the troikas have gone to join the island promenades, the Caucasian waters, the hand-kissing after receptions and General Dourakine's uniform. Now we had to be satisfied with an *izvostchek* at two roubles the hour.

Claude Anet has said that the conquest of Russian women is easy, difficulties coming afterward. There is nothing like beginning at the beginning. I suggested that we compare our souls. I knew the Slav heart and dreaded none of the contradictions which are merely marvelous surprises for the stranger. So, thus beginning, I gave Vasilissa Abramovna a kiss.

"What! Again?" said she, reproachfully, as I gave her another one. Her mouth was so long that a single kiss would not cover it. I excused myself, murmuring, "Distances are so great in Russia!" After this kiss, the next thing coming from her lips was a rendezvous at her house for seven o'clock next evening.

"You won't invite any one else?"

"I promise," she answered.

The street cars threw out big flashes as they passed along the Tverskaia. The greenish light fitfully colored the snow. The cars bore revolutionary symbols. A black boat showed the words, "Lenine will split wide open the sea of the middle class." The air of this smokeless city, like the air off a glacier, penetrated to the farthest recesses of the lungs with no effort to breathe.

"To be French is half the battle in love affairs, I believe. Were I a foreign woman, how I should adore French men! Our fathers, however, who taught this doctrine, little realized with what a weapon of propaganda they were supplying us!"

I slipped my hand within the softest of muffs. "How crude and undeveloped you are," she murmured.

II

Vasilissa Abramovna is specially favored. In a spacious and elegant apartment, she lives all by herself in a room nearly four yards square, in spite of the fact that, at Moscow, the dearth of lodgings permits each person to be allotted only a space of sixteen *archines*, or some two yards square. All wooden houses have been used for fuel. The result has been what is known as "huddling." For this reason, I encountered, in the entrance hall, eighteen pairs of boots or overshoes belonging to the different lodgers on that floor. The addition of my outer shoes to the lot made, with the aid of the warmth, a fine puddle. My fur coat I laid on the arm of the servant.

Above the flowered cretonne on the screen, I see Vasilissa, her eyes as heavy as anemones. She is surely expecting to be made love to. She is finishing her toilet. I am aware that I possess eloquence and am ready for the feast. I tell her that I had friends before I knew her, but that I shall seek no new ones. I find I have become quite another man. I repudiate the debts made by the preceding government.

"I don't like gifts," she remarks, as she washes her hands.

She shows me her leathern waistcoat and a woollen dress hanging in the wardrobe. "All you have to do is to say that you will help me choose my toilet, or that 'we are going to be faithful colleagues.' You need only call me your 'dear friend.' Those things will do quite well enough." And she adds, "Didn't I tell you that you come from a very backward country?"

Against the background of the porcelain stove, she stands out in a hard design like one of those bas-reliefs disinterred at Susa by the Dieulafoys.

"Vasilissa, I love you."

"As for me, I can't return the sentiment."

So I give her an embrace.

Noiseless as a vampire's flight, the servant enters. She is asking for money, if I am not mistaken. She is a big, coarse girl with a lock of hair on her nose, like the Russian

horses. While Vasilissa Abramovna disappears behind the screen, I examine her lodging. The principal article of furniture is a telephone. Since the Revolution, the telephone is exceedingly important in Russia. It has replaced the samovar, the ikon, and the tame crow. It is very common. It is continually carried throughout the apartment to be used by different lodgers. On a low chair rests the basin of water in which she has just washed her hands. Near the piano stands a bicycle. On the piano are the dishes and kettles. A table is encircled by a series of stools. Scattered about the floor are books, trunks and boxes, and a bust of Lenine.

The servant has gone away. We shall not be again interrupted.

"What do you think of loving?"

"Lovering? The criminal police officer?"

"No, of loving."

"I am not a theorist. Consult Lenine, volume IX, page 1125. Lenine, superman, can teach us anything."

I am thus made aware that Lenine is a Confucius.

"There are no superwomen, Vasilissa, there are only superfluous women."

The door opens slightly. Nobody enters. Vasilissa Abramovna answers an invisible interlocutor. I gather that some one is asking her support to obtain a passport from an influential personage. She promises to secure it and says, "Come and see me another day. We will kill the fatted calf for you." The telephone bell rings.

"Here—30-32-64."

"I should like to ask . . ."

"Thank you."

While she is replying (some one is seeking the telephone number of a friend's sister), a tall individual comes in without knocking. He is of reddish complexion and slovenly dress, appears like a disabled soldier, his teeth are much decayed by scorbutus and, like every one else, he has a portfolio under his arm. He is a clandestine merchant. He buys and sells platinum teeth, taken from the dead. He explains that all the coffins in Leningrad, swept loose by the floods, are floating away from the cemeteries

and being carried clear to the Gulf of Finland, yielding up their contents. He is making a fortune and wants us to share it.

Vasilissa pats my cheek.

"Oh, please don't get irritated. It is very difficult to be alone. Besides, why want to be alone? A Russian woman never allows herself to be embarrassed by others."

"I am weary of waiting, O woman with the slate-colored eyes. I want my pay for extra time. You don't reply because you understand very well. I have a most particular object. . . ."

"It is very difficult. That must be prepared for far in advance. The neighbors must be given theater tickets, the servant must be sent to her union. . . ."

"No private rooms?"

"None any more. One can go to a library, but the libraries are overcrowded. In the summertime there are the parks, but you have arrived at a bad time."

The door is slammed wide open. A child comes in, who is prematurely old and already decrepit—a regular little Oriental, full of combined insolence and humility. Without apologizing, he demands, "Goldwasser! Is Goldwasser coming back?"

"Yes. He is coming to dinner," replies Vasilissa Abramovna.

"I just dropped in as I was going by. If he's coming, I'll wait."

"Just as you like. Sit down. Here's some tea."

With her eternal lock of hair and dirty apron, the servant reappears. She again whispers into the ear of her comrade and mistress, who again gives her money. From the window, I look out at the falling night. The sky suddenly becomes brighter than the earth. Night in Moscow has peculiar ways, "which are not our ways." From the ninth story where we are we can see Moscow as far as Mount Sparrow. It is a concentric city, wherein the stranger revolves as within a Russian heart, amid skyscrapers, gilded cupolas, Greek crosses loaded with chains, and the Moskowa river, whose ice is furrowed by the children's skates. The double windows, plugged with putty

or stuffed with cotton, allow no air to enter the houses, and the snow is driven onward horizontally by a fierce Siberian wind. It clings to the trees and house fronts, on which it deposits a white coating. I am very well off where I am. Here in the room it is as warm as in the depths of a feather-bed.

Vasilissa takes the plates off the piano, gets the spoons, knives and forks from a trunk, and lays the table, on which she puts Caucasian wine, jam, and small pots of coarse china containing pickled grapes and sugared mushrooms. The child looks on. He wants Vasilissa more than he wants soup. Though young, he is already worn out. His nose and mouth are ten years older than the rest of his face. He pretends not to understand us when we speak French, but I see by his eyes that he comprehends everything. Vasilissa's dress this evening is so diaphanous that a filigree brooch beneath it is fully visible. The initials on it are not mine. I cannot refrain from telling her that I am aware she has two lovers.

"Three," she corrects.

"Are men a necessity or a passion of yours?"

Into the midst of this important conversation looms abruptly a huge giant, bearing a valise stuffed out in a roll. He acts quite as if he were at home. Without the slightest salutation to any one, he goes behind the screen, removes his clothes and, when stripped, stands up in the basin, which he first rinses with sublimate. He then pours water from the samovar over his head and body.

"Vasilissa, just see these fleas, let alone the other things! I shouldn't be surprised to find I had brought back typhus. I read my poems yesterday, in the Minsk synagogue. Here's the result!"

Powerful and bare as his poetic images, this is Mardochee Goldwasser, the Red poet. His face is that of a pugilist—one of these Jewish-American pugilists, new-comers to the ring, with open and engaging countenance, firm and decided mouth, steady eyes and clear-cut gestures. The man is literally a man of violence and of studied carelessness. Similar models can be seen at Bloomsbury Square, in London, or at the Rotonde, in Paris. Goldwasser published

poems, in 1914, which were inspired by Apollinaris. Returning to Russia from Switzerland, in 1917, he began to write for the Red propaganda. His verses were published in several colors, adorned with photographs cut across at the waistline. He has written political plays, atheistic songs for children, patriotic hymns, odes on fertilizers, rebuses in the form of hammers and sickles, and advertisements for the country's industries. He has pitilessly versified the songs and marches of the Red army, the New Code, food prices, the metric system for the peasants, and various factory regulations. He is active, honored, and prolific. He is the first Russian whom I have seen smile and whom I have heard speak without lowering his voice. He is considered original, an impression which he fosters. He plays with words, employing riddles, coarse language, popular ideas, crazy monologues, folklore, dialect and patois, and the slang of the workshops. All of this is permeated with a furious sort of erudition. Instead of a profound inventiveness, it is rather a working over of old things, a projection of the modern spirit upon familiar ideas, which are thus rendered seemingly new. He is continually talking of "redistributing the past." As with many young Germans and Russians, all his admiration is bestowed upon De Maupassant.

"He was a great writer, De Maupassant," he remarks, "but of course of no value today. He must be made over. I shall rewrite his stories, one by one." He becomes lost in reverie, only to resume, "De Maupassant—I hope I shan't die the way he did!"

Goldwasser is too much of an artist not to possess some neurosis or other. He has a special one for diseases. He is noted for his contamination phobia. He cleans everything he touches, sterilizes his table utensils, avoids the sick, wears rubber gloves and opens the windows so high that nobody can pull them down. He revels not in cleanliness, but in prophylaxis. For him, everything save words and ideas is contagious. As from an immense distance he looks at the unkempt child with the enlarged glands in his neck who, in turn, looks at the glorious writer as a thief looks at an array of valuables.

"What is your name, comrade?"

"Joseph Antonovitch."

"Where do you come from?"

"Odessa."

"Are you bringing us the cholera?"

"Nearly. I am bringing you some verses for your review 'The Future.'"

"I publish only my own poems."

"Mine are as good as yours are."

"How old are you?"

"Fifteen. Goldwasser, I want to sell you my poems. They are signed with my family name Israeloff."

"You may keep them."

"Only five roubles! I will let you have them for five roubles. Let me read them to you. I know they will please you. If you don't like them I will pay you five roubles—here they are."

The Tom Thumb of Odessa crosses his greasy boots, opens his papers and reads three short poems which I do not fully understand but which are evidently comic, stilted and fairly subtle. All this emerges from his mouth as a juggler produces a bouquet from a hat.

Goldwasser is rather impressed. Squaring back in his chair like an old man loaded with honors, as a Voltaire might do at Ferney—for is not Goldwasser at least thirty-five years old?—he loses himself in meditation.

"You win. Here are five roubles for your poems. They are not as good as you think they are, but you read them like a demon. Leave them, and go away."

It is gradually borne in upon me that Vasilissa and Goldwasser dwell in the same house. Of which of them am I the guest? While he is dressing, she tells him that there will be a meeting of the House Committee this evening. In other words, the lodgers' Soviet is to assemble. She also says that a financial inspector has been asking questions, having learned that Goldwasser indulged in unusual expenditures last week, and that extra taxes must be expected.

He venomously comments, "That's all the fault of your dirty Coty and of your French rice powder at a hundred francs a box."

She expresses contempt by the remark, "You are only a government jobber of the fifteenth class. You have been seen smoking in some embassy, you have asked for a passport to Paris, you know. Such things have to be paid for."

Goldwasser strikes the piano with his fist. "You women are all the same since you have put on trousers and cut your hair. For you, men have become only clowns. That will teach us to live scientifically!"

Meanwhile, we sit down at the table. Goldwasser calmed himself and drew his drinking glass from his pocket, for he also feared contagion from that. I felt that I was getting on his nerves.

"Are you investigating here?" he asked.

"No."

"Have you come to ask Vasilissa Abramovna's opinion on the problems of the moment? Investigations are welcome in Russia. Why, the other day, I got up an investigation on the needs of fetuses. It had a stunning success. Do you know what the Fetal Union must have? A little fresh air, less overcrowding, and more light. Like all the rest of Russia, this union demands electricity. And do you know what they protest against? Well, against the presence of foreign bodies. You can easily recognize the union—it has all the earmarks of unions. Well, we have eaten enough. Do you want to smoke? State cigarettes, of course. The wrappers are like the old ones, but the tobacco is poor and tasteless and now the Russians smoke them clear to the end. It's all degenerate."

The door opens again. How can the hinges bear it? Vasilissa rises. "Let me present my husband, Ben Moisevitch."

I have finally got it through my head that all these people live together. Goldwasser, who is richest, supports the others. It is the first country in which I have ever seen a poet paying to maintain others. Ben Moisevitch kisses his wife and, in the Russian style, kisses Goldwasser on the mouth. He is a man of any age, indeterminate, coagulated within his astrakhan coat by the cold, and behind his spectacles there are no eyelashes. His eyes, sparkling with ideas, suggest a barbarian's jewelry shop. It is not until

some time has passed that I perceive he is young, young like all the newer Russia is young, for in Russia old people vanish from the scene, active life begins at eighteen and life declines at thirty. An employé of the C. D. V. L. M., the Freshwater Fish Trust, Moisevitch has just come from his office. He now has a chance to indulge his itch for proselyting. Scenting a victim, he sits down beside me. He knows all about me already and is aware that I am at his house through friends of his in the police department who have telephoned him of my arrival.

Everybody begins to eat again, while we two start a conversation in German. Ben Moisevitch has lived for a long time in the United States. He talks directly and bluntly, like an American business man.

"Well, comrade, won't the revolution strike France pretty soon? Do you love Russia?"

"Ardently. First, because it is the only country on earth where nobody ever sings the Volga Boatmen's song."

"For my part, I love France, great because of her geniuses."

"Whom do you admire most in France?"

"Poincaré. He's an iron man, like Bismarck. After the days of October, all the Allied missions left. France was the only country that left any one here. Germany, Italy and England have small natures. They have all had frightful colic in getting rid of communism. But you Frenchmen? France is going to pay us for the mistakes we have made in judging the western peoples."

The talk drifts to Russians living in Paris.

"The White Russians? They are all dead men, my friend. They are burned out. We consider them mere burned corpses, millions of corpses."

"Speaking of burned corpses," interrupts Goldwasser, now a trifle drunk, "we have wished to build a crematory here but have not been able to get heat enough. The corpses could only be well roasted, but not consumed, so they were put in coffins just as they were. I will read you a poem I composed about it."

"Don't interrupt with your nonsense. We are talking

seriously. Do you wish really to understand modern Russia, comrade? Just count with me, now. Suppose we say three million corpses; there are one hundred million peasants gorged with land and now converted into proprietors, mere idle onlookers, sluggishly digesting their prey like boa constrictors; and finally there are eight million of us Jews. The Ukraine, Bessarabia, Turkestan and Bokhara, all these great reservoirs supplying Jews to the entire world, have collapsed. We have therefore overflowed in all directions, ardent, intolerant, insisting on our faith in the Talmud. Ezekiel prophesied long ago, 'Ye shall live in houses that ye did not build, ye shall drink from wells that ye did not dig.' There you are. There is only one continent left. It is Eurasia, the Promised Land, the greatest laboratory on earth. That expression has spread everywhere."

"I invented it," declares Goldwasser. "Besides, I am of the family of Tamerlane, our national hero."

Turned upon one side, with his blonde eyelashes pointing downward, an enormous sucking pig was now borne into the room on a china dish garnished with apples.

"Do you want to ask me something?" inquired Ben Moisevitch.

"Yes," said I. "When a man wants to be alone with a woman in Moscow, how does he manage it?"

"Are you in love with somebody?"

"Very much so."

"Well, you get married. Divorce is easy enough, but the real art of the matter lies in finding a way to remain in a state of betrothal, so as to keep the necessary allowance of cubic air space and preserve one's share of a room. You mustn't forget that we are under the laws of Lycurgus, here in Russia. Lenine in his addresses often speaks of 'labor and austerity.'"

Vasilissa Abramovna, who had refrained from eating because she wants to retain her figure (to avoid getting fat in times when one can never be sure of having food every day is a sign of special elegance), here comes back from a long telephone interview. She intercedes at this point on my behalf.

"Oh, come, now. This gentleman is a Frenchman and his nerves are sensitive. Spare him propaganda."

"Except your kind," I tell her, aside and kissing her hand.

Moisevitch looks at his gold wrist-watch and leaves without waiting for the end of the meal, carrying with him a caviar sandwich and a Turkestan apple. The C. D. M., or House Committee, is clamoring for him. The evening meeting will be important. The specially urgent question to be discussed is, "What shall be done if the toilets get stopped up?"

There will be divine discourses, followed by a vote which may defeat the president of the committee. The president is naturally a communist, but is generally hated. Ben Moisevitch is hoping to get his position with the C. D. M. The presidency is very desirable, for it supplies the municipal authorities with information about the lodgers of the house and a good many excellent pickings go with it. To be on good terms with his committee is the prime duty of every Russian.

Goldwasser refuses to attend, for he thinks that there are too many child representatives and he is afraid of whooping-cough. Ignoring us, he lies down on the common bed and is straightway snoring like a child with adenoids.

A little professor from the University of Tashkend takes his place while it is still warm. He is one of Moisevitch's friends. In his character of "pure" or "straight" communist, he is clad in black calfskin, wears dull-looking boots and wears a cap on one side of his head. He wants to be freer to get at a special dish which is brought in, so he places his leather portfolio—my God, what do all these people carry in their eternal portfolios?—on his chair and sits on it, to raise himself sufficiently. It is easy to see that he feels decidedly elevated by his education and very proud that he is no longer merely a poor Bokharan Jew, refused the use of that noble animal the horse, by Russians, and condemned to limit himself to the ass. He spreads his newspaper, the *Pravda*, in front of his plate and pays no attention whatever to us. Then he asks for

the telephone. He continues to eat as he listens at the receiver, his face seeming to be placed in a ladle. He seems to be dictating a course in political propaganda for the night shift at the dynamo factories. He is proud because he looks like Lenine. Finishing his oration, he goes on devouring red cabbage, with his mouth open and his Asiatic eyes closed, and soon goes to sleep in his chair, politely gulping several times before he is finally lost in slumber.

The time is getting on.

"It is quite evident that we cannot be alone, Vasilissa Abramovna, but I am persistent. Tomorrow, I will bribe the porter at the Hotel Savoy, the one who looks like a Venetian senator. You can come to see me at the hotel."

"Why? Doesn't love itself provide sufficient isolation? What difference does the place where you are make?"

Up to this point, I have been willing to accept the annoyance I have had. She may be innocent enough, but if she wants to make a fool of me and exhibit me like an animal in a street fair, things are quite different.

"Well, this 'house,' as you call it, is not a house, but a Punch and Judy show," I remarked. "I have never seen anything funnier in my life."

"That is not nice of you. How can I believe in you? I know well enough that every heart is balanced on its tip, as we say here."

"Vasilissa, the question is not one of the sentiment I feel, but a question of surroundings."

She sighs profoundly. "That's all you men think of," she says, using the very phrase which women serve up, cooked just right, in every country of the world.

A really magnificent young man interrupts. He seems a god of the Restoration with his Greek profile and English side whiskers. He approaches Vasilissa Abramovna and kisses her shoulder with so much chaste passion and restrained tenderness that he makes me actually suffer. With an entrancing movement of the hips he relieves himself of his furs, which he throws down on the pile of overcoats at the door. From his movements, which are like a dancer's, from the professional harmony of his gestures,

and from the late hour of his arrival, I judge that he must be an actor and a member of that specially privileged caste, whose members are spoiled darlings of this revolution as of every other one. The love that the public has for him is attested by his fine skin, bleached and softened by cosmetics, his feminine ways, his many silver rings, and his red silk hose. Vasilissa silently listens to him. He is Boris Rodstein and evidently occupies the first place in her heart. He is a dancer at the Grand Opera House and something of a parasite everywhere.

The indefatigable servant brings back some dinner for him. He talks of his successes, hints of illegitimate birth through some great family closely related to Dzerjinsky himself—Dzerjinsky, the Russian Saint Just, whom Rodstein seems to adore.

Vasilissa hides away the ordinary vodka, something which she did not do for us, and produces an orange variety procured from an Armenian smuggler. For among external evidences of wealth, food and drink bear the lightest taxes, and every one takes advantage of the fact. The caviar which was served to us was dry, while that given Rodstein is fresh. This makes me suffer still more than I did a few moments ago. I am obliged to admit the truth of the situation. Why must I be surrounded with conquerors and elbowed aside?

Decidedly, this community existence confers a rather low feeling of well-being and triviality which irritates me. This really easy-going, but seemingly disorderly, life, this mixture of pleasures and needs, this love trust, this conjugal régime and its too evident difficulties, the cynical hardness of the light beneath which people must remain idle while awaiting something better—these things fill my heart with unspeakable bitterness, which I endeavor to conceal with courtesy.

Ben Moisevitch now returns. He is so disturbed that he knocks the screen over and awakes Goldwasser. A fine assortment of Red language consequently ensues. The plumbing question discussed at the C. D. M. has aroused a defiant vote, but it appears that Moisevitch will probably not be elected as he had hoped to be. His wounded pride

incredibly sours him. A plot has been hatched against him and it is actually true that two Russians of the Christian faith are candidates who oppose him!

"These Russians penetrate everywhere," splutters Goldwasser, and adds, "Never mind, old fellow. Let's have a poker game."

Poker has supplanted the aristocratic card games of former times. Vasilissa takes no part in this game but sits near, suitably apportioning her interest in the plays which each one of us makes. She is filled with pleasure that we are all her slaves. All our chances in the game seem equal. Goldwasser skilfully makes the most of very poor hands. Moisevitch is successful with curious uniformity. Rodstein cheats clumsily, his nervous hands shaking and his handsome face twitching fitfully. I, like a westerner, play badly, make very little, lose my temper and become angry in the midst of the general affability. I am conscious, in spite of myself, of the hoarse locomotive whistles and of the bells of the railway station announcing the departure of men in place of the lacking arrival of God.

I cease to pay attention to the fatuous people who continually go and come in this cage from which my amorous feeling has taken flight. Every newcomer employs, when he enters, the same Russian verb, whose meaning I finally understand, for this verb means, "I enter as I am passing by." Every one who arrives is served with food.

I particularly remember one young woman who was especially ugly, and very agile, and who remained only a moment. She released the lace which she wore on her head (hats being out of style in Russia) and shook out her blonde hair, which was so long that it fell to her heels. She then stuck a mirror between her knees, re-arranged her hair and went away, remarking, "I just came in as I was going by," without allowing me to understand why she had climbed nine stories to arrange her hair in this place.

By six in the morning the samovar is steaming merrily and tea is served, in glasses which are too hot to be held, because the silver utensils formerly employed for the purpose have fallen into disuse since, as Rodstein says, "They are considered anti-revolutionary." He and I have lost

every kopeck we possessed. As but few players now remain, and since nobody is in a position to stake a palace one hundred and fifty yards long, like the one lost at baccara near the church of the Don Virgin, in 1913, the losers were made to pay up in a system of forfeits. Rodstein was condemned to kneel on the piano and hold two plates of water. As for me, a circle of pink cardboard was placed round my neck, my head being stuck through a hole, and I was made to swear on my word of honor that I would not re-enter the house without it. Looking at myself in the mirror, I appeared to myself like a coin mounted as a watch charm, so big and yellow did my face seem with the clownish collar about it. All pleasure vanished in a feeling of wrath, and I deliberately broke a china vase. This act, strikingly showing my ill-temper, was considered a sign of good-nature. In Russia, as a matter of fact, all restaurant bills bear a charge for "broken dishes," which testify that the meal has been a good one.

I gathered up the fragments of the vase and threw them out of the window. As if automatically, there appeared two minutes later a police agent, who seemed to have been carried up to our floor by duty instead of by an elevator. His red cap was pulled down over his ears on account of the cold. He assessed a fine of two roubles for throwing rubbish out of the window and tore off a receipt from a pad of blank receipts which he carried. Moisevitch, lacking tact, required me to pay the bill, which increased my anger and confusion.

Goldwasser remained indifferent. With the dawn, he began to have a fit of inspiration and started writing something on a piece of paper. Ben Moisevitch noticed my excited state. Drawing me into a remote corner, as if he intended to extract my heart in a dark laboratory, he set himself to studying me, in order to learn the mysteries of occidental nervousness.

"I see it all," he remarks. "You are in love. In the incipient stage. You are happy. We all know what that is. Those of us who have had the full experience are no longer happy, for our wounds no longer bleed. Goldwasser loves Vasilissa. So does Boris, and so do I, and so do

you. Only admit it, and a heavenly sort of truce becomes established between us at once. As soon as you admit it, we become brothers instead of being opposed and divided. Call me Ben." Vasilissa Abramovna wept as she listened to him.

I looked into the very depths of Moisevitch's fat eyes. I looked at Goldwasser who, in this darkness, this miserable tobacco shop, was writing a poem on "Spring." I looked at the imbecile Boris Rodstein, who was also weeping as he knelt on the piano with a plateful of water in each hand.

"I hate every one of you!"

"He is in love with her," yelled Moisevitch. "The Frenchman is in love with Vasilissa. Just as the snow makes our sky one with the earth, Vasilissa mingles us all together. His love for her is reflected back on us and glorifies us!"

"Not in the least," I cried. "The good thing in loving a woman, even a paid woman, is the fact that loving her separates her from all other men." I sought my snow boots.

"Don't go away," cried Moisevitch distractedly. "I can't live unless I am loved myself. I want to be loved too!"

I went out, bareheaded, like a man insane. The snow was still falling. The streets were deserted but brightly lighted, all the shops being lit up to prevent stealing. Watchmen could be seen asleep in the midst of the merchandise. In every window I saw Lenine. Lenine was in smoky cardboard, in relief against a factory, wearing leather clothing and with his hands in his pockets. Lenine was portrayed in waxen busts. Lenine appeared in photographs, his beard in the center of red rays cut out from the paper. Lenine beamed benevolently in bronze, Lenine gloomed in zinc etchings, Lenine was coolly calculating in paste, Lenine despised the world in luminous paper. The manner in which this propaganda belittles great things is indescribable. I strode over the nocturnal population, which is born of shadows and alike in all great cities. Storgi, brothers of the Madrid Street watchmen, enveloped

in sheepskins, lay asleep before the doorways. A driver was snoring on the seat of his sleigh, a Centaur with invisible legs and a beard filled with snow. I wanted to be driven away. The driver smilingly refused, spitting out his miserable sunflower seeds upon me as he did so.

"Take the second sleigh, comrade," said some one. "The first one is an equestrian statue of the policeman Guépéou."

My taut and tired nerves, doubtless saturated with excess of propaganda, relaxed to a subconscious state. Like a regicide, I climbed into a sleigh, stood up erect, and cried out, "Down with the dictatorship! Long live liberty!" My voice resounded through the sleeping street.

Heads appeared at windows. Men going to work looked at me and began to assemble.

"Brothers," I said, in my halting Russian, "I proclaim a better era. Long live my kind of liberty!" There was an instant of stupor.

Only the sleigh drivers, who are natural reactionaries, chuckled. "It's somebody out of luck," said one. For the moment, nobody dared approach. I saw myself reflected in a show window. I was really there. Perhaps I might have hated myself less were I not obliged to behold myself every day, yet today I was unlike myself, my hair wildly unkempt, my face very red, and the cardboard collar about my neck. Behind me, I saw a woman, and then two men, timidly advancing. I am aware that the hour of punishment is at hand, and turn to wage a futile combat.

"See there! It is a poor, crazy man," said the woman.

"A simpleton," said somebody else.

These remarks revealed the situation. Far from arresting me, the approaching people reverently joined hands. "Bless us," they implored. In the street, it began to be rumored that I was about to perform miracles. People stooped down and kissed the bottom of my overcoat.

TIPTOES

By ERNEST PEROCHON

(From *Huit Gouttes D'Opium*)

IT cannot be said with certainty in what century he was born. In fact he took the precaution to arrive suddenly and without witnesses during the span of time of twenty hours comprising the evening of December 31, 1900, and the following night.

According to all probability he was born of a woman; a robust young woman of ordinary height who had arrived at the Station Hotel at two o'clock in the afternoon and had been immediately received.

When on the morning of the first day of January the child was discovered, there were many who claimed that they had suspected it all along. Lies and Vanity! That the woman appeared robust for her age has been admitted, but that proves nothing against her; there are some very puny little beasts that are not all they might be.

If some one had found it necessary to form an opinion on this woman when she arrived, this opinion would have been extremely banal: a young woman, rather healthy, with a little bag, an umbrella, and a gray cloak.

It cannot be said that she hid her face; however, the truth is that her features could not easily be distinguished, for, the weather being threatening, she wore a veil like every one else.

On the morrow, when she paid her bill, she still wore the veil. She quietly went away not to return.

In her room, not long afterwards, they found a newborn child hidden in the folds of a sheet, at the foot of the bed. Because it neither moved nor cried, it was thought to be dead; its tiny soul snuffed out at the hands of an unnatural mother. But not at all; the infant merely slept—slept, while the event of its discovery echoed through

the musty hotel. And for the reason that it slept it was named Placide, without inquiring whether the appellation would be eventually deserved, for Placide means "He whom it is difficult to disturb."

The incident raised some commotion, there was much discussion and . . . but . . . for . . . in fact . . . and in the end not much progress was made.

The child was surely newly born. Of the robust young woman? Perhaps? Without doubt? . . . Who can say? . . .

Yet the room was not in disorder! . . . And then, too, nothing unusual had been heard. . . . However this hotel—now it can be said without offense—was not a first-class establishment. On the contrary it was a dirty place with plaster partitions, holes in the plaster, and bugs in the holes . . . and the least noise in one room could be heard in every other.

It would be with the greatest difficulty that a birth could take place unperceived. Admitting that an extraordinary mother might take but little interest in the event, the child would not confront it with the same stoical indifference. In fact, when a child is born, he instantly begins to cry as he is not accustomed to the currents of air. Now this one had remained silent! And evidently its mother had slept well! Any supposition, however absurd, might be permitted under these circumstances.

The young woman had left the hotel quietly and as apparently contented as any honest person. One was inclined to think that the young man had slipped into the world like one of those clever thieves who do their nefarious work without leaving a trace of their entrance. His strange silence, the care he had taken to get born on a singular date, the astonishing calm of his mother whose snoring could be heard during the greater part of that memorable night—all invited profound thought and rumination. Pre-meditation could certainly be admitted. One was probably in the presence of a particularly clever little lascar already remarkably adept in playing his game.

Very well! But the robust young lady must have expected the affair. Why then did she not make inquiries?

To the end the mystery was unsolved. But while awaiting complementary information it was necessary to look after the child.

It was baptized Placide without more ado. To the Registrar of Births it was frankly stated that he was born on the first of January, 1901, at one o'clock in the morning and therefore in the twentieth century. As he himself could not go to see, the worthy man accepted the information he was given, and inscribed the declaration. He also appeared to give little thought to the matter. Afterwards Placide was sent to the "Poor House," which passed him on to a poor young girl who had milk to sell . . . for reasons that concern no one.

The nurse had only praises for Placide. He was not at all a squaller as most children are apt to be until quite an advanced age. When she spoke to him, and particularly when she spoke to other people, he listened with the greatest attention, followed all the gestures, all this without interruption, without crying, or bursting out into laughter. Instead of opening his mouth and staring like an idiot, he generally kept his lips closed. One after another his teeth appeared without the nurse noticing them. He never cried "Mamma, Mamma," he never said "Papa" all over the place. He simply babbled "Chut . . . chut . . . chut. . ." Ah! it was not a troublesome nurse child. During the day, like any one else, he took the milk when it was offered to him but at night he proceeded differently. His nurse placed him by her side but when she awoke, as she was a good girl, she took the trouble to draw the child onto her breast and to place everything at his disposal. Now when this occurred, Placide was never hungry; it did not appeal to him. The nurse, of course, went to sleep again with a quiet conscience. Then Placide softly approached and gorged himself. In the morning the nurse was very sorry to have nothing to offer to poor Placide, who did not cry but assumed a pinched little air.

It could never be understood how he learned to walk. At fifteen months he was still only a great lazy bones capable of sitting down for long periods of time, of roll-

ing from one side to another, but not of making use of his legs. Often the nurse placed him upright against the wall or along a line of chairs. He stayed there motionless and without uttering a murmur. But . . . dared she merely turn her head and he was on the ground. How did he fall? Did he do it on purpose or for fun! Or were his legs really too weak? With him it was impossible to know; one could merely guess. While he was thus on his little bottom, scratching his belly with an innocent air, his good nurse quietly attended to her own affairs—combed her beautiful hair, or received her best friends.

One gorgeous, sunshiny spring day she carried Placide out under a tree twenty yards from the door and he, not wishing for anything better, commenced to roll about in the cool shade. Soon the nurse returned to the house to look at herself in the glass. Behind her went a young man. He passed near Placide, who pretended not to know him although he had seen him several times. The man entered the house and drew the door closed. This man was strong and hardy. The nurse could have run away as the door was not completely shut; or at least it seems as though she could have called out. However she did neither. Imprudence? Curiosity? Stupidity? Clever is he who can tell. But that is enough. The man was in the house for a good quarter of an hour and nothing hinted that he thought of leaving when the door slowly, gently opened and Placide appeared. The nurse, seeing the door ajar, cried out and the man swore in a rage. Then Placide uttered his little "Chut . . . chut . . . chut." But they barely had time to perceive him when he disappeared, shut the door nearly all the way and returned to his tree. The nurse found him a few minutes later, still seated on the same spot and busily engaged in rubbing his stomach. She could not believe her eyes and wondered if she could have been dreaming. Nevertheless she picked the child up by the arm and gave him a good spanking on principle. It is generally conceded that it was on this occasion that Placide took his first step. However, the facts are uncertain; perhaps after all he had made previous attempts.

However that may be, from that day on he certainly

walked alone; and the happiness of his nurse was not increased by his growing independence. She much enjoyed chatting with her friends. Of course she continued to see them from time to time but the damned little Placide caused her fears detrimental to her health.

Although she took care to place him at a distance, he was always on hand to throw stones at the window or rattle the latch at the crucial moment. When she ran to see what was happening, he had already turned the corner of the wall. Thus regularly Placide arrived in places where his presence was not desirable. Most frequently, besides, he disappeared like a shadow. No child ever made less noise. He seemed to be treading on wool.

When he was a little bigger he made the acquaintance of the other children in the neighborhood. If these young boys and girls had been experienced they would, without doubt, have been astonished at the manners of Placide. But they thought only of laughing like imbeciles, and shouting and fighting, and noticed but little what was going on around them. They commenced, a common incident, to play four together, and all at once they were five! Without a word Placide had slipped among them.

As their intentions were obvious, they even yelled them aloud. Placide performed his little tricks silently and gained the advantage every time. Then, in spite of everything, the game was spoiled. But when his companions commenced to strike him, their arms fanned the air or they rushed against one another; Placide always managed to escape and on the morrow they had forgotten and he fooled them again. From such encounters, which he really enjoyed, he rarely returned empty-handed. At his house presents were brought by the nurse's friends but they were not of the type to appeal to him, not playthings or sweets. His companions, on the contrary, received many pretty and attractive things in profusion from their parents; then Placide was busy among these simpletons. What pleased him particularly was to see the others stare with open eyes, then, losing all control, raise savage cries because a ball had disappeared or a bonbon was missing. Placide had some

safe hiding-places and no one ever knew where he kept the results of his labors.

It was not long before he interested himself in grown people. He crawled into porticos without making any more noise than a little mouse. From cellars to attics he visited the houses of the neighborhood; such visits were not always without profit. Soon he began to neglect the games of his days of innocence; he had a new occupation—one of especial interest—to listen at doors. God only knows what he heard. Evidently he did not comprehend everything; nevertheless he acquired a knowledge that he guarded with care and stored up for future use. At seven years he was much better informed than many children of a less tender age who had attended school and received better lessons. It was when he was of this age that he became a schoolboy. Several times his nurse had attempted to lead him to the institution of learning. She was a worthy person, but ineffectual and inclined to be talkative—if the information supplied about her is correct. While she exchanged words with the other women on the street, she did not notice that Placide's hand slipped from hers. When she was ready to continue on her way to the school, then only was she aware that she had lost the child. She always resumed and completed the conversation before she returned to look for him. But he went to school by himself and never boasted of the fact.

Was it a Monday or was it a Tuesday? It occurred to no one to remember, but it is quite immaterial. It was one day that the master found Placide in the classroom, hidden behind a screen. But probably it was not the first time that he had come there. When questioned, he replied in Normand, uttered several "Chut . . . chuts," and this assured every one but imparted little real information. But a hypothesis may be ventured. Placide, listening at the school door and hearing many things that he supposed, in his infantile candor, to be precious secrets, had entered with the crowd of children and secreted himself behind the screen. He probably had repeated this manœuvre several times before being detected. At the school his faculties matured. Not that he was what might be termed a brilliant

boy; he played truant frequently—for reasons little suspected—and even when present was not interested in the most serious things. But he showed good sense when questioned, a subtle type of sense not fully appreciated. Severe and unjust, the master kept Placide in after hours. The boy objected and therefore did not become educated in the ordinary sense of the word. But as a partial compensation, what useful observation! What surprising secrets! It was not long before he knew all the hidden little family stories of which his companions and their parents were not informed. The master himself was no saint. Placide, poking his nose in at just the right moment, made that valuable discovery. From this moment on, he enjoyed a singular freedom from restraint and the teacher left him in peace.

About this period, his singular appearance began to be remarked. He grew very rapidly but only in height, which made his body look uncertain and inconsistent, as it increased by zigzags. His knees and his head inclined to the front much more than his heels so that his back maintained the balance. He had long, thin arms that he swung like balanced poles, and his hands with their spread fingers always seemed to be resting on the air, weak and sprawling like plucked and wilted buds. All his limbs however were well developed and ready for immediate action. His body was soft and flabby. If he played with his companions or if he made some expedition for personal reasons, he moved with a noiseless rapidity, as silent as if he were swimming in a tank. On fête days, before the eyes of every one, he sometimes pulled himself together; more usual, however, was his habit to walk about disjointedly and on tiptoe.

At a time difficult to determine, Placide ceased to attend school. His absences became more and more frequent and suddenly it was noticed that he no longer appeared at all. But he left in a most discreet manner and made no unnecessary ado about his departure. This event coincided with the commencement of a curious apprenticeship about which we have no definite facts. What was the industry? One is swamped in a maze of conjectures. Several master work-

men—a wheelwright, a glazier, a turner—one day spontaneously declared, as they were seated together in a café, that they believed they had seen Placide in their workshops, and that if they found him again they would give him a lesson he would never forget. But they made these statements only after drinking; questioned in a more sober moment they would have been less certain. However, it may be surmised that Placide considerably extended the field of his investigation. If he did not associate with the honest but mediocre bourgeoisie as a recompense he had peculiarly familiar relations with persons whose lives abounded with obscurities and uncertainties. Some of these people, jovial and worthy folk but a little down on their luck, were in trouble. Public malignity accused them of the infraction of the most fundamental laws; and the judges—who had little else to do—immediately interested themselves in matters that in no wise concerned them. There is nothing to convince us to believe that Placide had any connection with the misfortunes that these unhappy people suffered. Quite the contrary. Now it seems a certainty that he himself, having but little confidence in the accused persons, passed by still less favorable ways to a position of wealth unusual for such a tender age. Besides, he made no boast and nothing was suspected or determined through him.

Then the war came on and all of this was forgotten. Placide walked on tiptoe more than ever. Imperceptible as was his transformation from adolescence to manhood, it was one of the greatest epochs of his life. The world in general was completely mad. Among the people who were not fighting, many chattered about with little regard to what they were saying. It was useless to say, "Keep quiet!" "Be careful!" For a youth of mettle there was much to do. The idea of an apprenticeship to any position involving manual labor was no longer to be considered—assuming, of course that he had originally entertained such a thought. Placide kept his lodgings with his nurse but he traveled much. His absences, which had formerly been very short, became longer and more mysterious as he grew older. He always returned unexpectedly. To

give an example: One evening his nurse, who had not seen him for several days and now believed him lost for ever—she had even considered putting on mourning—sat crouched before the fire in the dining room. The table was laid but she had touched nothing. Then she commenced to weep. Suddenly she arose and there was Placide, seated at the table, hands folded, devoutly saying grace. Often in the morning, when she had imagined herself alone in the house, she heard Placide peacefully snoring in his small room; he had returned during the night. How? In what way? The nurse, who was good but stupid, loved him very much and always received him with great joy. Receiving fewer friends as the marks of time made her more difficult and less prepossessing she became garrulous and curious, and asked Placide one question after another. He listened to all she said with a preoccupied air, then said "Chut." If she insisted he threw her a strange look, sometimes hastily arose; then the matter was concluded in a twinkling. What did he do during these strange absences? Did he work for the benefit of society? Very possibly not. Certain persons accused him, rather at hazard it must be confessed, of various actions that ordinary folk might censure.

Never was he seen to handle firearms nor did he play the trumpet. Yet his habits, his character, and the little one knows of his past make one believe that he took a lively pleasure in shooting; that is to say, in clandestine shooting, at all times and in the best game preserves of the seignorial lands. The game, accustomed to the crude ways of the professional hunter and poacher, could not resist the solicitation of Placide who, we regret to say, sometimes far overstepped the rules of good sportsmanship. It is probable that Placide the hunter received assistance from certain discreet persons—let us say of doubtful origin and of no importance. But union makes for strength and that is a great thing. With these careful fellows Placide could undoubtedly take part in more important and more diverse enterprises. His affairs increased in importance and thus added the necessity for rapid travel.

To make these journeys ostentatiously with head in the air like a vain person would have been contrary to Placide's

nature. In the past he had been accustomed, with the consent of the driver of course, to ride on the back of covered carts. It is probable that he discovered and employed similar ways to go from one point to another on land or river. He is said to have declared that during the long war he never paid a centime, not one, to the railroad administration. But to conclude that he never entered a train is the height of absurdity. One might say that the administration hires very clever agents who are familiar with every trick and are very difficult to cheat. But it must not be forgotten that the dodges employed by Placide were most extraordinary. He had his own inimitable way and was most difficult to detect. It may thus be assumed that he boarded both freight and passenger trains. Here is a fact of interest: Irrefutable witnesses permit it to be published that one day early in the morning Placide was seen wandering about a certain market town; yet on the same day his presence was noted, before midday, at another fair town at least one hundred kilometers by rail from the first. What was he doing, this Placide, thus to run about the fairs, markets, and other meeting places? It has been said that the bump of commerce was unusually well developed on him. Well, he had an additional bump for he loved to sell lost articles. But such a tendency is not in any way as characteristic as one may think it. If it were but a question of selling at a high price those articles that cost but little or nothing at all, each of us here below would be more than pleased to be a merchant. In fact, it does not seem that Placide was a good business man. His temperament in no way inclined him to that vocation. Some pretend that he sold watches, necklaces, and rings, at prices eliminating all competition. But those assertions may be questions. Witnesses of undoubted veracity agree that he never had a shop worthy of the name; that his stock at the best never comprised anything but objects of no great value, such as laces, pencils, knickknacks, etc. And again it would be difficult to prove that he realized any profit on the things. Ignoring all advertising, he sold little, and this little at the most moderate prices. A bad method!

He was so careless a merchant that, if one can believe

the reports, he even delivered goods and left before collecting his payments. Fortunes are not built up by such means, nor can sufficient money be made to raise a large family.

Now Placide had no family. He still had his good nurse nor did he ever allow her to be in want for anything. It is said that he had a considerable treasure hidden away in a hole in the wall but he never paid a sou of taxes. Where did he amass this treasure? Let him explain it who can. The war ended and there was again a period of prosperity. People bought everything, their minds confused by a delirious joy. Certain folk with whom Placide had doubtless had business relations made great progress and Placide followed these curious profiteers. He followed them on tiptoe as was his wont but that did not prevent him from surreptitiously piling up new wealth. As he always listened at the doors and ever with greater attention and more diligence he learned many things well worth knowing.

He was now twenty years of age and the law demanded that he should become a soldier. However he was not in the army or for so little time that it is not worth mentioning. The way of evasion was honorable—the doctors found that his knees were too pointed and his shoulders too round. But why should one ask? Such questions are too delicate. The important thing is that Placide returned to the country of his birth, a land as familiar to him as the contents of his pocket. Barely had he re-established himself when his good nurse died. Died . . . there was no doubt about it. She died on a Tuesday morning from indigestion caused by eating too many mussels. It was claimed that the ptomaine germs had passed into her blood. She was buried on Thursday and that was the last of her.

Those who had the leisure were sorry for this poor Placide who had no one to look after his food and his linen. But already, either because he wished to give a free course to his grief, or because he wished to avoid the chatterboxes of the village, or for some other reasons, he disappeared. One and another looked for him . . . then they forgot him and passed on to other matters. Placide's absence was of several months' duration. Let us remark, however,

that the word absence may not be wholly applicable. It was a fact that no one met Placide. But who investigated further? Who would dare to swear that Placide would not appear before his compatriots in different but equally deceptive forms?

It has even been whispered that certain singular incidents, on the solution of which the sagacity of many searchers was vainly employed, would not have been so inexplicable if Placide had passed that way. Such suppositions are most uncertain and are not based on reliable evidence, but one might as well note them for the benefit of those interested in irrelevant details. In the first place, it would be necessary to determine whether the persons who broadcasted these rumors had not some ulterior motives; whether they were not blackguards working for their own interests.

During several months there were no traces of Placide. It is sad to relate that all this time no one thought any more about him than if he had never existed. But he got back at them before long. One fine morning, the institution of Placide & Co.—capital entirely paid up—was established. Placide was married and had taken, with his wife, and his servants and clerks, a house, formerly seignorial, which had since been renovated. At once the sneerers were silent, and Placide's actions became a frequent subject of conversation. Although he was conceded to have great talent, and he was supposed to have amassed a considerable treasure, it was said—not without some degree of reason—that his recent splendor was due to his marriage. Those who had not yet married dreamed of a like fortune; and they would have given much to learn how he had succeeded. But it was not easy to obtain confidences on such a subject. Placide was taciturn and in no way resembled certain fops—we could name them if we wished—who do such wonders with words that they have no time left for action. Nothing was learned from him and little was gleaned from others. However, as the result of certain disputes that Placide had with his wife, the curious were able to gain some information. It must be observed that it is hazardous to expect the truth from a woman, above all from a woman in the

heat of temper. Besides, Placide's wife did not make a circumstantial recital but only uttered a series of violent invectives. Nevertheless there were people, more accustomed to the fantasies of the imagination than to rational deduction, who built up a curious romance on the basis of these statements. But let us tell it:

Helen grew in grace and virtue and every morning found her more beautiful than the evening before; but still she had remained as innocent as the lamb which has never strayed from the side of its mother.

The great merchant, her father, was very wealthy: he had not amassed wealth by the mediocre and painful labor that contents poor, uninspired people; but, on the contrary, boldly, and with singular rapidity. In his country he enjoyed a new but considerable prestige, and the young lords of the vicinity paid their respects and each of them sought the hand of Helen who had approached a marriageable age.

Now the great merchant, although he realized the value of breeding and *savoir faire*, did not wish to give his daughter to the first title that came along. He watched over her jealously and as the lords who desired her were not very clever he sent them away without hope, when they came to his castle. A few succeeded in softening his heart, however, as they pretended to be favored by Helen herself. To test them he proposed certain enigmas, and when they failed in the solution, he dismissed them with a horrible laugh and a leer of triumph. When Placide approached the spot he found that no one dared to pay court there. But he already knew the merchant, having had transactions with him during the war. Of course he could not depart without making the acquaintance of the daughter whose virtues and beauty he had heard proclaimed so frequently. So he did not hesitate to attain his ends.

From the night following, Helen had visions. She had a sort of dream, so strange that she wished to tell her father but was dissuaded by one of the followers. The little innocent said nothing but awaited the night with extreme impatience. Placide returned, according to his habit, on tip-toe through the window. This time Helen only feigned

slumber and followed the whole affair which suffused her with a voluptuous joy. So on the morrow she sought Placide and led him to her father. Then, with the naïveté of her youth and unsophistication, she implored him to make Placide her husband. "If not," she said, "I will remain a maid and a prey to my dreams."

At these words the merchant comprehended everything. He succeeded in hiding his anger and smiled—rather wickedly, though—as he said, "If he wishes to marry you, let him solve the enigmas." Then he asked the company to withdraw a little. He did not doubt but that Placide would fail and he felt an inward pleasure that for this one instead of turning him away with a mere smile, he would kick him over the threshold. Now Placide's first words made the merchant's ears stand up. He met with little difficulty in deciphering the enigmas, he had solved so many before; and though, in the ordinary sense of the word, he was not learned, he had at least picked up many curious things by listening at doors. He took pleasure in explaining to the merchant why his daughter did not resemble him in any way, how he came into prestige, and to enumerate the ways he had followed, the tricks he had played, the dangers that he had run, and the perils that might still await him. On hearing all this, the merchant was terrified and remained quiet and subdued. Then, by a sign, he ordered the company to withdraw still farther. Then he opened his arms wide—there was really nothing else to do—"I accept you as my son-in-law," he said, "although you are not of gentle birth."

"Chut," said Placide in reply. Then he threw himself into the merchant's arms. Upon seeing that, the company drew nearer. Some clapped their hands, others burst into tears of happiness.

The wedding was celebrated at once to the sound of flutes and hautboys.

Such is the popular version of the story and it is worth . . . what it is worth. . . . Was the young Helen as charmingly naïve as all that? Those who have known her since have their doubts. On the other hand, had the great merchant really reasons for fearing Placide? And should a

purely symbolic sense be attached to the episode of the enigmas? Others asked themselves if it were not simply a case of the merchant's having been charmed by the subtle wit of Placide.

So many points remain undetermined that each one must judge for himself. If the ways and means are unknown, the result was certain. Placide married the young Helen, obtained the wealth of her father, and thus gained an eminent standing in the ranks of his countrymen. People who had formerly made fun of his gait, or even accused him of improper actions, now pressed to his door for he had promised to increase their riches and they stupidly believed him. Placide really had a great deal of difficulty in conducting this enterprise successfully. He understood only the principle of the business. Outside of that he had no concern. But he had first-class clerks and the affair progressed smoothly.

A pretty wife, a prosperous business, devoted servants, a fortune which was constantly growing larger—Placide's life seemed to contain all the elements necessary to happiness. Many very honest citizens are obliged to content themselves with much less.

It seems that right from the beginning of things Placide sought to live up to his position in society. As time went on, the angle of his knees grew less sharp and he became ruddy of face and arrogant. His head high in the air, he walked along with stiff knees, clinking heels as he went like some knight of a less modern century. He was wont to burst into laughter on the slightest pretext and was fond of talking to strangers about his private life.

A superficial observer would have said that all was well with Placide. But even the most casual soon could remark the lack of enthusiasm shown by him. Each day his eyes reflected more and more unhappiness and discouragement.

The reason for this deplorable change was his wife. The young Helen in fact, once a miracle of sweetness, innocence, and virtue, was changing her character rapidly. Soon, as far as could be, *Deo volente*, she would have the sum of faults permitted to the average human.

Without doubt, Placide could find matter for reflection but he had other more serious trouble, we believe.

Placide had followed a path contrary to his character. Now his real character began to show itself slowly but surely. In society, the unfortunate fellow was greatly embarrassed. He was sometimes so abashed that he would shiver down to the end of his big toe but his pride impelled him to carry on.

He had the habit of looking his new friends squarely in the face but it is not alone by looking people in the face that their secrets are discovered. Placide was certain that there must be marvelous and lucrative misdeeds hidden beneath expressionless masks of his new-found friends but he failed miserably in his effort to ascertain them.

He was jealous of the little kitchen scullions who had the opportunity to listen at the doors of the great. Often, in the midst of important dinners, he was surprised to find himself saying, "Chut . . . chut" and he would just check himself in time. He would have given a good part of his fortune to be able to slip out by the back door and leave the other guests in order to listen without fear behind the keyhole.

He resisted the temptation but not without much difficulty. It was quite evident that one day he would be unable to control his desire. And in fact, some days later, Placide fell ill, really ill and seriously ill.

The beautiful Helen immediately sent for one of her friends, a young doctor.

From this day, it becomes very difficult, if not impossible, to describe the mixed emotions and thoughts of Placide. His life since his strange illness sounds so unreal that only a Munchausen would dare recount it. Let it suffice to tell the story as old grandfathers are wont to do before the large, cheery fireplaces on especially bleak winter evenings.

It seems that the doctor felt Placide's pulse, then he thumped him on the back to see if he was hollow and where his lungs were. Finally he looked at the color of his tongue.

After that he smiled sadly and went off to find the beautiful Helen who awaited him with impatience in the

corridor. They shut the door and retired to a secret chamber where they conversed for many hours.

It is not known exactly what they had to say to each other, but it is supposed that the beautiful Helen, by her insistence, finished by shocking the doctor. At least it is certain he cried: "But, my dear friend, you do not think. . . . You do not know what I risk!"

Helen, it seems, persisted in her wicked ideas.

"A little patience," urged the doctor. "Ere long he will be just as badly off without the aid of science and the world can't reproach us."

Helen, however, was stubborn.

"Very well," agreed the doctor, "I will go back and do my best for him. I will give him a little injection and . . ."

The doctor started to do as he had promised. He opened the door surreptitiously and went into the room. But he did not see Placide for Placide had gone. Gone! Yes, gone! By the chimney? There was not one! By the window? It was much too high and besides it was barred. By the door? But the door was bolted!

The poor doctor tried vainly to understand. He called Helen and she in turn called the servants. The house was turned upside down but without any result.

The doctor was certain the patient had been seized by a sudden access of fever. They were certain never to find him alive. He went off, having arrived at this solution which was to his satisfaction.

But as the doctor was walking along, slowly humming an old air, he tripped and sprained his leg so badly that he could not get up.

Later he explained that he had the impression of receiving a blow on the head which caused him to stagger and fall. No one, however, believed this story for it was not his head that had been injured but his leg!

Whilst the doctor lay on the side of the road, the beautiful Helen leaned out of her window, making castles in Spain. As evening fell, she ordered a little supper to give her strength. When she was about to seat herself at the table, she gave a cry of horror. Placide was seated in

his usual place. He had already consumed most of the dinner and he was most apparently cured of his recent illness.

The beautiful Helen, without the slightest hesitation, reproached him for his inexplicable conduct and for the false pleasure he had given her by disappearing. Placide quietly peppered his cheese and then said "Chut!"

That was not all. He put his finger on his lips and winked slyly at some mysterious person at his left as he used to do when his old nurse overwhelmed him with ridiculous questions. But the beautiful Helen knew nothing of his habits and besides she was not frightened. She continued her remarks with new vigor; so much so that Placide was obliged to rise quickly. And inversely it happened that the beautiful Helen soon afterwards found herself on the ground. She also did not exactly know how she fell. But as a measure of precaution she swore to avenge herself.

Placide recovered his health.

He walked lightly on tiptoe, listened at the doors with intense pleasure, played every one inexplicable tricks. In spite of the company of his wife he regained a taste for life. During several days things went on very well.

However Placide soon made an observation that caused him to reflect. All the secrets he found out referred to himself in some manner or another. He thought it was a coincidence and redoubled his zeal to learn at last something quite new as he had a violent desire to see clearly, not into his personal affairs, but into those of others.

Alas! he had to submit to fate. Whilst, before, his name was never mentioned in the conversation of his compatriots, now that he was married, rich and powerful, every one had had something to say about him.

He understood, but rather late, that to live hidden it is necessary to live unfortunate.

The most important conversation which Placide overheard after that between his wife and the doctor was likewise about himself. Certain of his very good friends who were often at his parties told one another marvelous tales of which their host was the hero. Rumor after rumor

from bad to worse, from simple misdeeds to downright crimes, they ran the gamut of wickedness in discussing the adventures of Placide. The latter was not angry. He merely appeared before them surreptitiously and his friends grew strangely embarrassed. Placide reproached them for their conduct and told the worst stories he knew about. He told these scandals with great gusto and you may be certain he knew them all.

The next day Placide spied on his clerks. They also talked about him as if they really had nothing better to do. They knew many things of which they should have known nothing. They left nothing untold so that one could say that their conscience was quite clear. Placide found himself in a most annoying predicament because these clerks were strangers about whom he knew nothing malicious. He set traps for them and, as they yielded to temptation, he rid himself of the lot of them.

He replaced them by well proven persons, old acquaintances about whom it would not be difficult to obtain precise information in case of need.

The new clerks set to work with a will. They were not experienced in their new business but, if they neglected certain details, they understood the principles admirably. They had not this preoccupied air so often observable with clerks afflicted by a great soul. Sufficiently dishonest to be always polite they much pleased the customers of Placide & Co. Also these brave people crowded to the doors, bringing their money in the hope to see it fructify beyond measure.

He listened to his best friends: men, women, old men who already had one foot in the grave, children who acted without thinking—all had disagreeable words for him that did not interest him at all.

Drunkards mentioned his name in joyous but disgusting songs; fast women made remarks about him and the beautiful Helen that are not repeated in good society.

One day he listened to some card players. They accused him of having some faked cards and of making "coup." Another time he listened to doctors: their unanimous opinion was that he would not last for long.

All that in the end did not leave him a good taste in the mouth and yet he could not prevent himself from listening. . . . One does not make one's self and it is difficult to remake one's self. An inner voice commanded Placide: "Walk! always walk on tiptoe."

He grew even more courageous and secretly penetrated the houses of his enemies and business competitors. These gentlemen simply proposed to turn to their account the treasure of Placide and that of his clients. To bring about this they proposed to bring Placide & Co. into the courts. Placide did not care to learn any more. He returned home. To two neighbors who made inquiries as to his health, he replied "Chut, chut" and then he ran off like a man in a great hurry.

Profiting by his absence, the new clerks set to work at their best. They also thought that Placide was too rich, that his clients likewise were too rich. Placide soon discovered this. He found out likewise that the beautiful Helen aided the chief clerk who tried to do his best to relieve Placide of his wealth. Without losing sight of his treasure, he watched his competitors, his employees, the chief clerk and the beautiful Helen. It seems the last two frequently had chats in quiet corners and even took a boat on the river in order to make certain of privacy.

The chief clerk overwhelmed Placide with good advice and warnings as to the care of his money. As to Helen she gave evidence of her tender affection for Placide. She often invited him to go boating but he could never accept for there were always clients who demanded his attention.

One day, however, when the last of the clients had brought his money, Placide consented all the more willingly to this pleasure jaunt for he thought there might be trouble with the police. He accompanied the beautiful Helen and the chief clerk to the boat but, after they had embarked, Placide gave the boat a push with his foot and returned to the house as he said he had forgotten something very important.

The boat gained the middle of the river where the current was swift. All at once the beautiful Helen and the clerk stood up, uttering cries of alarm; the boat was sinking.

It disappeared in the foamy waves, dragging down the two unfortunate occupants who were drowned before the eyes of the powerless spectators.

Whilst some courageous citizens made search for the bodies, others went to inform Placide with all necessary care. But from the first words he understood the dreadful truth.

He rolled his eyes and uttered piercing cries. Suddenly, he appeared to calm himself. It was evident that he had taken a grave decision. He went his way and disappeared from the community.

And if he has not stopped yet he must have made fine journey!

This is the end of the fireplace story.

And the children, who have already been asleep a long time, have not the habit of asking for more.

Then the older people became curious. "The treasure," they demanded, "what about the treasure?" But the disappearance of the three people in the flower of their youth, it seems to us, is far more important.

The beautiful Helen and the chief clerk, who had been carried by the fast flowing waters, could not be found for many days. Finally they came to the surface, swollen and horrid. The coroner was advised and he declared that these two unfortunate people had met their death by asphyxiation in the water—he was quite certain of this—but it was impossible for him to state why the boat had floundered.

This mystery much occupied the public. What interested them still more was the disappearance of Placide. The hypothesis of a love drama was rejected as impossible. There remained only suicide. The unfortunate fellow had left his hat, his watch, and a false tooth on the bridge. That seemed to indicate a desperate turn of mind. Placide, incapable of overcoming his grief, had thrown himself into the waters that had just swallowed up his beloved wife.

Very well! But why didn't his body come to the surface?

One must conclude that he had been sucked by the swift flowing tide to the rapids and thence to the mouth of the

river. For their part, Placide's competitors, his clients, and his clerks do not believe this hypothesis.

Therefore, the most famous detectives were put on his trail.

There they still are.

One can only wish them good luck. For it is most disconcerting to have a man disappear as if he were smoke.

And every one wants to know if he should weep for Placide or if, on the contrary, he should consider him as a genius but an evil genius. After all . . .

THE "MISERY GAME"

By CONVARD DE PROLLES

IT was at a dinner given in honor of the tenth edition of his masterpiece, "The Unbelievable Truth," that Luxeuil told us how he conceived the idea of writing the book. We were only six including Luxeuil. Just his dearest friends. It was Laforgue, the painter, who persuaded him to tell this curious story.

"It is very simple," began Luxeuil. "If one day I was inspired to write 'The Unbelievable Truth,' it was because a long time ago circumstances placed me in a position so compromising that it was practically impossible for me to extricate myself . . . and as the result of a tragic coincidence I, Luxeuil, was forced to live for months and months in the fear of being mistaken for a low-down crook. I was without possible defense or alibi and was menaced by the gallows.

"Here are the circumstances which caused me to be drawn into this regular detective-story imbroglio. It was at the time, my dear Numa," he said, turning towards me, "when I was leaving at your request for Argentine.

"My wife went to Bordeaux ahead of me, whence we were to sail on the following day.

"I happened to miss a last appointment and unexpectedly had a few hours free.

"If any one of you has ever been on the point of changing your life radically, you'll know how strange one feels with time unexpectedly on one's hands.

"My wife took all our baggage along with her to Bordeaux. She put our steamship tickets, passports, and other papers, as well as all our money, into a small hand-bag.

"I did not know what to do with myself while I waited for my train which did not leave for several hours.

"I felt an uncontrollable desire to take a last look at Paris.

"For a long time I simply wandered on the boulevards, filling my memory with the noises, the sight, the very touch of this Paris night life, which is unique in the world.

"There came a time when, somewhat stunned by this noise and the crowd that I had sought for just an instant before, I walked down a small passage which I noticed.

"I still remember quite well how I gazed for some time at the window display of a bookstore, looking at the beautiful bindings. While doing this, I heard a slight noise, not far from me, and a few feet away, in a dark corner, I saw a woman, a young one as far as I could see, who, leaning one of her hands against the wall, seemed to be standing up with difficulty. As I watched rather discreetly, I realized what the noise was that had attracted my attention. Although she did not seem to be a poor woman, her teeth were chattering.

"I approached her. I assure you that at that time I had no plan in view. First of all I was guided by curiosity and also, to tell the truth, by a real desire to help a human being who seemed to be in need of assistance.

"When she saw me come near her, this woman first seemed to shudder. I cannot say whether it was a true shudder or if it was pretended shame. But in a few moments, I realized that the woman who was opposite me was suffering. And I even realized that she was hungry. Perhaps she was a working girl who had lost her job and had unsuccessfully looked for another one for several days! Her worn-out and yet decent-looking dress, her old shoes, her ungraceful and out-of-style hat, everything about the poor girl, showed straitened circumstances or, even worse, misery, which she was attempting to hide.

"I tried not to convey the impression which my rapid inspection had made upon me. I very politely asked this woman if she would allow me to offer her my arm for a few moments until she got over, what I called, her spell of weakness.

"She gave me a swift glance. Then my offer was

accepted. This woman leaned heavily upon my arm after nodding her head and faintly smiling her appreciation.

"We walked a few steps, then the woman had to stop. Again she trembled without being able to stop. I began to feel quite a physical compassion—in a way it was animal-like, if you prefer the expression—for that suffering human being. In spite of my natural instinct, I took it upon myself to take this unknown girl into a small neighboring café.

"A few minutes afterwards, a hot drink made her feel somewhat better. I then (giving as an excuse the reason that my train would soon be leaving Paris) asked her to share with me a small supper in the place we had just entered.

"She seemed to blush when she accepted. The few words she then pronounced were the first that came from her mouth.

"‘I cannot do otherwise than accept your offer to sit opposite you,’ she said to me, ‘because, just at present, I still feel so stunned that it would be impossible for me to find my way home.’

"She smiled faintly while she made this explanation. I had before me a poor, wandering dog, which could not decide to turn down the appetizing bowl that was being tendered to it.

"I felt indeed great joy at seeing the stranger pull herself together again. She tried not to devour her food with too much haste. Yet, in spite of herself, she ate with a sort of gluttony. From time to time she interrupted her meal with a sigh, to explain that, if she spoke so little, it was because her spell was disappearing gradually but slowly.

"I replied along the same lines. Neither one of us fooled the other.

"To you, my dear friends, I can indeed affirm that up to then I simply experienced the satisfaction of having saved from the pangs of hunger, perhaps even from death (one never knows), an unfortunate and, incidentally, a young woman, who seemed to be regaining her love for life. But, what spoiled everything, was that when this

woman had had plenty to eat and had apologized for accepting my invitation, she questioned me in quite a different tone of voice and asked me if she could not pay back the debt of gratitude which she had just contracted.

"A few moments beforehand, I would have violently protested against this would-be debt. At that very moment, on the contrary, I was overtaken by a peculiar feeling. Like all customarily silent individuals who suddenly become very talkative after having escaped a great danger, I replied with smiles, in a light tone of voice and with a point of irony.

"What it was that I replied exactly, I do not remember. Nevertheless, the stranger who, by this time, decidedly interested me because of her peculiarity, straightened out and replied to me rather impertinently, that she quite understood the extent of her debt to me and would know how to pay me back.

"After an awkward moment, I again started the game going by declaring that the thanks which would be agreeable to me would doubtless be hard to obtain. And a smile which contained many unsaid things, the kind that I am not used to, I assure you, underlined the *risqué* character of my reply.

"The unknown woman smiled somewhat sourly, with a look of disgust, of contempt too perhaps, with some disappointment, in fact as though she had expected her savior to be more chivalrous. But she remained content to say to me in a rather cutting tone of voice:

"Well, are you not waiting to take me wherever you wish? Must I not pay my debt this very day since you told me that you are leaving town tonight?"

"Later on, I could not blame myself enough for the kind of overjoy with which I passed my arm under the arm of that woman to take her to a near-by hotel.

"But, if one of you were to claim today that he never, at any minute of his life, was capable of committing a bad action which his past reputation seemed to render an impossible one, then I would tell him that he simply lived to too little an extent if he never yet met with such an occasion.

"Here I am then, I, Luxeuil, at a late hour, taking this unknown woman (quite obviously not a professional street walker), who followed me with evident repugnance, to a furnished house.

"No doubt you will tell me that I was behaving disgracefully toward my wife, whom I was going to deceive for the very first time, and also toward this woman of whom I was going to ask a price which, no doubt, in her eyes, was far more considerable than the favor I did her.

"But, the bad inclination which I then followed was much more than sensual desire, the desire not to appear to be 'green' in the eyes of this woman. Indeed, there suddenly came to mind the absurd idea that she might have been acting, just to get a free dinner on account of not having previously found a 'generous customer' and just with the desire of obtaining this free meal from a passer-by without giving anything in exchange.

"I remained stubborn; the stranger followed me with submission. As soon as we reached our temporary room, she nevertheless displayed further nervousness at seeing herself alone with an unknown man, when I closed the door.

"At that particular moment, I was positive that I had made a mistake, that I was to behave tenderly to this poor woman.

"I quickly realized that the poor girl was then suffering morally at being in the room. And a little cruelty caused me to demand what had been promised me. But suddenly, she started to sob, and nothing seemed to be able to stop her.

"The stranger was then overcome by what was really mad despair and, violently pushing me aside, she ordered me to leave her.

"An instinct, which I was unable to repress, threw me into a violent temper. I tried to make this stubborn woman (who to my mind was simply acting) give in. What I doubted then became a certainty. This woman, in a fit of mad exaltation, began to brandish a tiny pen-knife which she got from I don't know where. As I laughed at her ridiculous weapon, she cried out to me: 'All I would have to do would be to cut my throat if you

approached me. And you would be told that you killed me.'

"I then asked her what she demanded of my forbearance.

"That you should get out,' she cried.

"Bewildered, and not understanding a single thing about this rather ridiculous adventure, I left.

"The cold air of the street quickly made me myself again. I realized what a stupid adventure I had thrown myself into. I walked for some time, thinking over the peculiar behavior of that poor kid, her changeable temper, her contradictory attitudes.

"Then, suddenly, I became worried: I got to thinking that it was very foolish of me to have left a woman who was exalted to a state nearing madness, all alone. A wild idea got into my head: 'Suppose she killed herself?' I thought.

"From that time on my mind was definitely made up. I decided to turn back and, from a distance, see whether this peculiar woman had left the hotel.

"Hastily, worried by I don't know what anguish or apprehension, I turned back. At the corner of the street I was prevented from going farther by a crowd. A passer-by, who did not notice the ghastly look of my face, replied to my questions: 'They are just going to carry away from the hotel the body of a young girl who has just been murdered.'

"I fled. A train left the station a few moments later. I had only just time enough to jump into it. As soon as I got over my emotion, I realized that was no doubt the best possible solution. Suppose I had been suspected? How could I have explained that terrible coincidence? How could I have made anybody believe the brutal truth?

"I arrived at Bordeaux during the night and, the following morning, I read a very small story in the papers telling of a false clue which the detectives were working on, perhaps simply so as not to 'scare' the murderer of the unfortunate woman, upon whom, it appears, one had discovered positive proofs of murder.

"I was inwardly delighted at not having been able to leave any trace of my passage in the hotel room of which I remembered every single detail. Suddenly, just at the very moment when the ship was leaving her pier, I made a quick gesture, nearly a nervous reflex. Putting my hand upon the side of my traveling jacket, I realized that my pocket-book was missing. What little money which had remained there, some envelopes addressed to me, some cards, ten times more than is necessary surely to identify a man, were in it. And now, I was sure of it, the pocket-book could not have remained anywhere else but in the room, is what I thought as quick as lightning: in the room where the crime was committed, while I was the only one that knew that it was not a crime which had been committed there.

"What can I tell you of the weeks, the months of anguish I went through. I changed my name, giving professional reasons as an excuse. I did everything that was necessary to hide my trail, to the utter surprise of my poor wife who did not understand anything about these unusual precautions.

"Ten years later, when I returned, having acquired an honest living and having already climbed the first step of the ladder of distinction, I assure you that when I had to go through the usual inspection of passports by the police, at the port of debarkation, I trembled with anguish.

"What my life has been since then, you know quite well. The articles I sent from Argentina, on the slums of that strange country, had caused me to become a specialist in the psychology of criminals. And thus it was that, one day, a prosecuting attorney whom I made the acquaintance of thought he would greatly please me by offering to let me be present while he interrogated an habitual 'enticer.'

"She is,' he told me, 'the creator of what we call "Playing the Misery Game to Entice." She commenced her dishonest practices when she was yet a kid. She has had a police record for the past twenty years.'

"I thought I would become mad when I recognized in the police photograph of that woman, which the attorney showed me, the unknown woman whom for fifteen years

I had obstinately called 'my victim.' I evaded his invitation with some sort of an excuse."

"Well, what about the murdered woman?" asked one of us.

"Through a coincidence, one hour after my adventure took place, a poor girl was murdered in a near-by hotel. Incidentally, her murderer was 'given away' several months later, and after having been arrested, he confessed and was given a life sentence.

"There," concluded Luxeuil, "is how I conceived the idea of getting material which enabled me to publish the book of which we are today celebrating the success, 'The Unbelievable Truth,' which is determinative of the errors of Justice."

THE NEST IN THE WINDOW

By PAUL REBOUX

(From *Les Lettres*)

THE sea, like the earth, has its seasons. Summer makes the face of the waters as shotted silk, comprising every shade of blue and bluish green. In the autumn, the ocean takes on golden tinges from the sunset as does a forest from the ripening of its leaves. Winter visits the sea, too, with mournful colors, an air of sadness and barrenness, heavy, dull grays, shadowed with purple.

Spring comes to the sea as soon as the sky has thrown away its veil of mist and washed itself clean in refreshing rain; azure blue reigns then, and with it springtide.

Then is the sea at its best, irradiated like a sheet of mother-of-pearl. The heavens get sprinkled down a rain of lilies upon the sea, whose petals are gently rocked to and fro on the soft-toned waves.

Like a woman nestling against her lover, the sea hugs the selfsame rocks she scourged a while before; she caresses them with seductive whispers and clasps them in her arms. The tide flows more slowly, laden with gelatinous masses, floating seeds of life; it swells voluptuously, throbbing under the love-laden breath of the April morning breeze.

The spirit of spring penetrates into the very depths of the sea. For weeks at a time, creatures of the deep remain in a kind of procreative trance, a helpless prey the while to their foes; for they, too, feel, right through the heavy curtain of the waters, the penetrating impulse of creation, the only instinct stronger than self-preservation.

Fluttering around the islands and along the coast, birds in couples are chasing each other, in that playful way that is Nature's prelude to the serious business of love. Eider ducks hasten on their flight, noisy gulls gather together in chattering groups, and on the cliffs the grasshoppers ply

through the mild air in capricious curves, making it sing to the music of their wings.

Together, Alain Redec and Joseph Le Moal kept watch in the lone lighthouse of Roch au Diaoul.

This lighthouse stood on a current-beaten reef, some three miles from the coast, whipped by every wind that blew, exposed to well nigh perpetual storms.

Of this gaunt granite tower, Alain Redec and Joseph Le Moal were the sole garrison. Every fortnight, one of the lighthouse men was replaced by a relief man. The spell of duty was of one month at a time; lone duty it was, in dreary exile, halfway between sky and sea.

As it happened, this spring, the two watchmen had this much consolation, that the weather was unusually calm, which toned down somewhat the horror of this lonely outpost duty. They had little to do, so just abandoned themselves to the lure of the spring air, lotus-eating in the mild breath of the sea.

Sometimes, when all the cleaning and polishing was done, they would climb down to the shore when the tide was out and nestle between two rocks. There they would remain, their eyelids heavy, their senses lulled by the lullaby of the waters, thoughtless, basking in the sun.

They would remain silent for hours, merely pointing out to each other some seabird on the wing, or muttering some comment on the kind of craft this might be that sent out that faint wreath of smoke on the far horizon. They moved only to strike a lighter or scrape out the nicotine from the bowl of their stumpy black pipes.

One day, as they were lying thus, Redec pointed to a dim spot that seemed to be flying with difficulty, a tiny atom in the immensity of the heavens.

"Have a look . . ." he said. "Think 't might be a butterfly?"

Le Moal blinked his eyes, shading them with the palm of his hand, and looked silently for a moment: "Why, yes. 'T might be."

"Poor little devil," commented Redec. "Would be wiser for him to turn back to land. He won't find many flowers to suck on this rock."

The butterfly, blown out insensibly to sea on the wing of a soft land breeze, was drawing near, visibly losing its strength. Suddenly it collapsed, one wing soaked in the water, throbbing desperately with the other.

Redec rose to his feet. "Truth, 't makes me sick to see the poor thing like that!" He went to fetch a pole.

"That won't be much use," muttered Le Moal. "He'll crack up anyway, whether you drag him out or not. What's he to feed on here?"

The other man replied: "I'm just telling you I'm going to save him. And that's that."

Vainly did he extend the pole over the waves, the full length of his arm, till it swayed so he could hardly control it. Ripples would bring the butterfly almost within reach and then carry it out again.

"Try from over here. 'Twill be easier, maybe," suggested Le Moal, who was beginning to have his interest roused by the rescue work.

Redec was wet to the knees now but still persisted, till, suddenly, the butterfly foundered. Nothing was seen now but the waste of the waters, empty and oily. And sadness tinged the two men's thoughts.

The butterfly had roused their thoughts of spring, and here in a trice spring had been snatched from them. Their imagination wandered over to the fields back yonder, to the moors covered with bracken, where misty dawn sprinkles the spiders' webs with diamonds and the heather is sweet with the scent of honey. From their dull stone prison, amid barren rocks where the only creeping plants were rust color, they saw visions of pear trees snowed under in blossoms, of fresh green grass and the blushing bloom of the hawthorn.

Le Moal wondered whether the plants were beginning to shoot up in that little garden of his, which the house sheltered from the bleak winds of the Atlantic. Redec, the while, more romantically inclined, was dreaming of the hedge-lined paths where lovers wander of an evening. He could see before his eyes every nook and cranny on the heath, hallowed for him by memories of fond caresses.

Coincident with this thirst for green things that sprang

up in the two men's minds, spring unlocked in their souls physical and moral forces, calling their reserve of comradeship, filling them with a confused impulse to protect, to fondle, to play the rôle of a father. This kind of vague goodness permeates April air, and it filled their rough hearts to overflowing.

They had no one to lavish this love instinct on, so, in default of anything better, they spent it on their tasks; feverishly they set to cleaning and scrubbing, scraping and polishing. Then, taken with sudden tiredness, they would go back to their rock and steep themselves once more in the sun whose rays streamed in through their jerseys to the very pores of their skin.

Never within memory of man had there been so long a spell of calm on the Brittany coast. The wind had so long ceased to blow that the ocean had sunk into a deep rest, placid like the waters of a great river. The tide would creep up silently to its level and the ebb steal away again, uncovering the reefs, without so much as a ripple disturbing the face of the waters.

So living things began to breathe freely, and the most timid of them to venture out of their holes. Other creatures, that usually clung to the coast, were emboldened to venture out over the sea. Two sea-swallows blew in one day and started building their nest right up against the lighthouse, in the alcove of one of the stair windows, one of those trap windows no man ever dreamed of opening.

Redec was the first to notice it.

Several times, he had heard the rustling of wings against the panes and, one day, curiosity got the better of him. Clinging to a jutting stone in the wall, he hoisted himself up till he could see the nest. There were four eggs in it. Bits of seaweed and shells, tiny fragments of stone, cemented together with some glutinous substance, formed the little structure, which was solidly fixed onto one of the inferior angles of the window.

The swallow mother, affrighted at this strange sight of a human face, fluttered away in terror.

Redec jumped down again and called to his mate: "Hey, boy!"

"What's new?" shouted Le Moal, who was working upstairs at the light.

"Something great! But come down very softly . . . come, it's worth it."

Le Moal's footsteps could be heard coming down the metal winding staircase. "Well? What is it?"

Redec lifted him up till he could reach the window.

What most excited their wonder was that the birds had managed to reach the rock at all; no doubt the unusual calm of the weather had deceived them.

They kept coming back to the nest in their talk that day. It was a diversion in a place where diversions are rare and acquire additional importance from the fact. Also, Redec and Le Moal felt a kind of admiration for the pluck of the birds in thus flying over the ocean to keep them company and bring them in their prison, amid the waste of seas, the comfort of living things.

On the morrow, as soon as the light was put out, Redec came downstairs and found Le Moal busy fixing up a kind of wooden ledge so they could stand and have their eyes on a level with the window. Then they both got up and watched in turns.

The little mother bird was sitting close, and one could see the twinkling of her tiny black eyes and the feathers of her wings spread out over the eggs. From time to time the male would fly home with some dainty in his beak; he would balance himself on the edge of the nest, wings half-outspread for his next flight, give her the bit as if in a rapid kiss, and be gone again in a flash.

"Sweet, isn't it?" Redec murmured, ever ready to respond to emotion. And even Le Moal could not repress some tender feeling. These were special circumstances, and his rough peasant's nature softened. He was a farmer's son and from early childhood had, like most of his kind, been anything but tender-hearted in his treatment of animals. He had got into the way of pushing the sheep about and teasing the stiff-necked, querulous turkeys, kicking the farm dogs and killing off sparrows for the sheer joy of the

kill. But the tiny adventurous couple, confiding and trustful, struck in his soul some chord of dormant paternal love.

The two men, after every meal, gathered up the crumbs and strewed them on the lighthouse steps, and felt glad when, an hour or so later in the day, they found them all cleaned up.

The hatching was an event.

Redec, as it happened, witnessed it from start to finish. He saw the mother, perched on the edge of the nest, picking a hole in each egg in turn and pecking away at it to make it larger, the while the father, half-anxious, half-filled with pride, circled incessantly around the little home.

Le Moal guessed from the silence that his mate was on the watch at the window, and joined him. Redec motioned to him with his hand: "Hush . . ."

They both climbed onto the ledge, holding each other by the waist to prevent a fall, and, behind the pane, Redec's bearded face lay close up against Le Moal's bony, scraggy head.

The mother was still pecking at the shells, tearing little lumps away at a time, and through the openings, first pale beaks appeared, then bald heads with eyes still half-veiled with bluish membranes, then little bodies, the color of raw flesh, featherless, with just a few straggling wisps of down stuck to the skin.

Maternal wings folded themselves tenderly over the newly born, whose inquisitive beaks would at times pierce through the warm coverlet of the feathers.

On the morrow there was a further surprise; for just one brief moment, while the mother left them uncovered, the four birdlets could be seen.

With his coarse, square-nailed finger, Le Moal gently knocked on the pane. And at once four thin necks were craned and four hungry beaks yawned open, shutting down for the uttering of a plaintive cry and then opening again wider than ever.

Little by little the parents got over their initial fear of the two faces behind the pane, which experience had taught them were inoffensive. They no longer flew away and it

seemed as if a real bond of sympathy united the two men and the two birds, sharers of this vast loneliness.

Meantime the little ones were growing fast. Tiny wings sprouted up, like stumpy moles of flesh at first, then bristling with nascent feathers. Their backs took on a brown tinge and under the breast the down grew whiter day by day. As the heads were increasing in size, the beaks seemed to assume reasonable proportions.

One of the four, however, was not developing as he should.

Doubtless the others were swifter on the pounce and robbed him of his share of the food that was brought to them. Trembling and wretched, he was the pariah of the nestful. His parents neglected him. His brothers pecked at him, as if wishing to destroy utterly this unworthy specimen of their species. Nature plays these cruel tricks at times. And the poor little doomed one, opening his beak right down to the throat, used up his tiny remaining bit of strength, seeking in vain the life that was ever edging away out of his reach.

Redec was touched with pity to see him yawning with hunger the while his fellows were comfortably digesting their latest meal. He tried to save him; no easy task.

He asked Le Moal about it, who replied he remembered once upon a time having spoon-fed some young mavis.

The problem was that, if one opened the window, there was a risk of destroying the nest, of frightening away the parents, perhaps forever. Was one problematical existence worth the possible sacrifice of three healthy lives?

Le Moal was quite clear about it. "Let him bust," he said. "His father and mother ought to care more than we; if they don't want him they don't want him, and that's all there is to it. No good kicking against it."

"Well, I don't know. I daresay if we could help him some with his food, he'd grow up as strong as the rest."

"That's not at all sure."

But in the end Redec got his way. They carved out a little plank, in the shape of a spatula. Then, when one day the nest was unwatched, they cautiously turned the brass knob and opened the window.

At the noise, the four birdlets craned their thin necks and opened wide their mouths. But only the weakling got satisfaction. It was clear that this unwonted good fortune utterly disturbed his mental balance, and made him unable to swallow properly. Redec had to balance the food carefully on the end of the stick and push it down his throat. Redec stood on the ledge, while Le Moal held up a bowl of warmed breadcrumbs to him. There was something slightly ludicrous in the intent seriousness with which these two great rough fellows were feeding a little bird.

Suddenly, wild cries were heard and a fleeting shadow flashed by, returning ever to the assault, with brusque, bold despair. It was the mother. At last, tired out maybe, she took up her position on a rock and cried incessantly, beating with her wings the while, till the window was closed again.

She did not go back to the nest till the father had turned up and made a preliminary investigation. They seemed to hold parley together and then, not in a straight flight, but by devious ways, returned home.

After a few days, however, they became tamer, no longer flew off agitatedly, but stood side by side on the near-by rock, seemingly full of approval and gratitude.

Le Moal had been quite won over by the zeal of his companion. His own share in the benefits rendered to the little birds had attached him to them. He watched them with the same attention he had, in his farming days, devoted to caring for a calf or a foal. It gave him a sense of satisfaction to see them fatten and grow feathers, just as if the success of the nestful were to bring him personally some credit or profit.

As for Redec, he had formed a real affection for the birds. His little protégé he loved just as a mother her weakling offspring whom her unremitting care has rendered strong. Almost one would have thought that the affection was mutual, for whenever the window opened, the bird would give evident signs of joy.

For the rest, the four of them were now up to the same level and there was no further need for the special feeding process. The window was left closed; but the crumbs

grew in volume on the lighthouse steps. Sometimes the breeze, that had started up again in the last few days, would sweep them away and then one or other of the men would, after each meal, go down to reprovision the steps. Passing by the window, he would never fail to stand up on the ledge and see how the brood was getting on.

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The day was drawing near when Le Moal, having done his month's spell at the lighthouse, would have to be replaced by that gawky, scatter-brained, violent and stupid fellow, Etienne Kerroch. Neither Le Moal nor Redec anticipated this arrival without anxiety. Kerroch was a great Nimrod before the Lord, and there was little doubt he would attack the birds. He never came without his gun.

Would they tell him all about it? Perhaps, if they told him nothing, he would not notice the nest, and the little ones would have time to learn to fly and thus escape death. Perhaps, if they did tell him, he who had not witnessed the hatching and had no personal interest in the matter, would just grin cruelly and seize this dainty dish set ready at his hand. They could not make up their minds and on the very eve of Le Moal's departure they were still undecided.

As the relief ship, distinguishable by her red foresail, came into sight, Le Moal went up on the ledge to say good-bye to his little winged friends.

They looked quite grown up by now, and their prentice wings seemed filled with the craving to feel space beneath them. They leaned right over the edge of the nest, ready for the dive. One of them had actually ventured onto the window-sill and, from this point of vantage, was studying space with obvious interest. Le Moal looked at them for a moment pensively, then turned to Redec who was waiting for him on the staircase:

"Better say nothing about it, I'm thinking. 'Twill not be long before they leave us now, anyway."

"Believe you're right," he replied. "But I'm going to

take down this ledge so he doesn't tumble there is anything up."

"Funny thing," reflected Le Moal, "I'd never thought it would give me a sort of pain to leave the beauties. But then, we had got used to them, sort of grown part of us, they have . . ."

"That's all right," said Redec, "they will not fail for anything. I'll see to that and that no harm comes to them."

The relief boat was anchored below. The comparative roughness of the sea made it necessary to land the supplies by means of a cable stretched between ship and lighthouse. While the packages were gliding along the cable, Kerroch kept up a perpetual fire of cheap jokes and weak puns that kept the small crew of the ship in good humor.

It was a curious contrast: the man who was now condemned to a spell of exile on the dreary rock seemed in the highest of spirits, while the one who was leaving it for the joys and comforts of shore life seemed morose and depressed. The more Kerroch joked about the doings on shore, the more Le Moal shrank into himself and became sullen.

At last, when everything had been hauled ashore, Kerroch himself sat in a leathern chair and let himself slide. Dare-devil that he was, halfway across, he slipped down and, hanging merely by the arms, performed some wild acrobatic tricks.

Le Moal tied up his foul linen into a bundle and made up the rest of his belongings and eatables into a packet with a handkerchief. He was just going to step into the sliding chair, when Kerroch shouted:

"I was quite forgetting my gun. . . . Good thing I remembered in time. Hey! Father Quemeneur! Chuck the gun along!" And in a trice, the shotgun came hurtling along the cable through the spray.

Le Moal and Redec exchanged glances. Both had felt a kind of tug at their heartstrings, for they knew their man.

So when Le Moal, safely aboard, waved his cap, it was less in greeting to his mates than in farewell to the nest, the nest that was doomed, like enough.

At the outset, Redec succeeded in warding off danger

from his protégés. He always volunteered for the downstairs jobs, fetching food up from the stores, oil or drinking water, lest the other man should hear, in passing by the window, revealing sounds. For the birds had got into the way of watching for some one coming down the stairs and would start chirping and beating their wings.

Every day, Redec revolved the great question in his mind: should he tell Kerroch? It could not be long now before he would discover the nest. Having discovered it, he would lay claim to it and treat it as his own find. But, if he were told, this family of four that Redec had taken on would afford matter for jokes and sneers innumerable. He would never stop talking about it. It would become unbearable. That would not be so bad, but the worst was, he would almost certainly insist on throwing the entire swallow family into the cooking pot.

Many a time, Redec decided to brave ridicule and tell the man all about it. He prepared the ground by making himself specially amiable, rendering his mate little services, addressing him in a friendly, chummy tone. But, at the last minute, his courage always failed and he put the revelation off till the morrow.

Then he would assail himself with reproaches about his cowardice.

Fortunately, the little ones were fairly strong now and would soon be able to fly off. Their parents were teaching them the mysteries of flight. Often, when Kerroch was taking a nap after meals, Redec would go out at ebb tide, down to the shore, and watch. The father and mother were fluttering round the window, then plunging straight into the air, wings outstretched, as if gliding down an invisible plane. With a fine, sweeping curve they would come back, encouraging their little ones with little intermittent cries. And the young birds, timid as yet, but eager to try, leaned out, always on the verge of taking the plunge, but held by some instinct of fear struggling for mastery with the instinct to fly.

On Kerroch's waking, the whole brood would suddenly lapse into silence. It was Kerroch's gun that frightened them, for it was never still. Kerroch was keeping his

hand in, practising his shooting prowess on gulls, petrels and all manner of sea-fowl. Every shot rang deep into poor Redec's heart; he feared to learn what the latest victim was. The sight of blood-covered feathers on the kitchen floor made him sick at heart.

With all that shooting, the menus had but little variety, for most of the birds hit went trailing their death agony out of reach. The only ones that got into the cooking pot were poor things Kerroch had shot sitting, resting on a rock.

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One Sunday morning, when Kerroch had used up more than the usual amount of ammunition, Redec, who was cleaning the glass reflectors, felt very uneasy. When he came down, he was greeted by his comrade with a mysterious smile: "Watch out! There's going to be a surprise!"

His first care was to go straight to the window. The entire family was there safely, but crouching together in terror at the incessant fusillade that had been going on all morning.

A great load lifted from his heart, he went upstairs again and finished his work. Kerroch was acting cook and, right on time, he called up. But his voice seemed choking with an impulse to laugh.

"Help us!" thought Redec, "what's the matter with the idiot now?"

Entering the kitchen, his nostrils were assailed with a pleasant smell and he espied, on the table, right in the center, a dish covered up with a plate.

"Come, old man, and smell . . . all right, isn't it?" said Kerroch, taking the plate off the dish. There, on a heap of rice boiled in gravy, with little golden brown croutons stuck in it here and there, lay four birds, round, shiny with sauce, stretching out their little legs that had been singed by the flame.

Redec sat down. He had seen the nest with its occupants safe but a while back. Still, to make doubly sure, he inquired:

"They're very small, these beasties of yours. You must have shot down a nestful of young . . ."

Kerroch plunged his spoon into the dish: "Queer thing," he said. "We had this dish right at our hand all the while. Several times I heard chirping, so this morning I set out investigating, and I found this right close up against the window. I just had to grab them . . . they were just ready for flight. Tomorrow would have been too late. Come, taste them . . . see how tender and delicate it is . . ."

Redec, his heart almost bursting, could not trust himself to speak. Besides, what was the use of talking, of explaining, now? This idiot's head could not assimilate anything anyway. . . .

"Well? What's the matter? Why don't you eat?"

"Yes . . . just a moment . . . I've forgotten something upstairs. Eat away . . . don't wait for me."

He rose and went out. The free, fresh air on the balcony round the lighthouse cooled him down a bit. Suddenly, above his head, he saw something fly across the sky in a flash and he heard a cry of anguish . . . it was the father!

Another, answering cry, and another flying thing joined the first, eddying in great circles round the tower. And he felt something of the torture of these poor parent-birds, coming home to find their nest empty and violated, which they had left so full of life and hope.

A few moments later, the metal staircase shook under Kerroch's heavy tread and the man appeared on the balcony.

"Well?" he inquired. "What is it?" Then, seeing the two swallows in flight, he laughed: "My . . . there's just what's needed to make up the full half-dozen . . . a regular family party, it'll be."

This time, Redec found courage to speak out and tell him to keep quiet and stop his cruelty. "Like a schoolboy . . . out after nests . . . it's stupid and cowardly."

His voice rang out with such passion, and such anger lit up his eyes, that Kerroch was astounded and dared not reply.

"It's your fault," Redec continued, "that the poor things

have death in their voices . . . and mark my words, this'll bring us bad luck, as sure as I'm standing here . . ."

The sternness of his tone lent his words a fatalistic ring of prophecy. Kerroch's conscience was not very clean; moreover, like all bullies, unexpected contradiction always flustered him.

"Dost hear?" Redec went on. "Listen . . . it's father and mother . . . they are crying for their little ones. Could you not have let them be?"

Kerroch hid his embarrassment by a brutal phrase. "Oh damn, they're sickening, in the end . . ." But he went away downstairs again, his head hanging, feeling all wrong and vaguely humiliated.

The whole day long one could hear the anguished cries. Shrill they were, so that one could scarce bear them. They had been lamentations at first, but now they had in them the shrillness of despair.

All else was quiet, for a thunder storm was brewing. The air was heavily laden with electricity, and it lay on one's forehead like a heavy load, gripping as a vise. The sea lay dull and dead, stagnant under a beating sun. The azure of the sky had become a kind of pale milk color, and on the horizon, a barrier of dense, dark clouds was rising steadily, in sharp outline, like a range of high cliffs.

The cries lasted throughout the night, then, about five in the morning, stopped abruptly. Kerroch, whose turn it was to keep watch, saw them veer round all of a sudden and fly out to sea.

Whither were they bound?

The cries had been bad enough while they had lasted, but their sudden ending seemed more trying still. The silence seemed more oppressive, more dead, than the normal silence of nature at this hour. There lay in it the foreboding of some dread disaster. It was a hostile silence, fearful in its hostility. Something evil was brewing: how to guard against it, since it was unknown?

Ever since the evening before, the storm had hovered on the skyline, as if waiting till more reserves had rolled up before launching the great attack on the sea. The oppressive effect of it was steadily increasing, however. Mist-

like vapors were rising from the water. An unhealthful, clammy heat made the smell of the seaweed an unbearable stench.

Toward evening, as the sun reached the barrier of clouds, the sea assumed a livid hue and started a choppy, mournful dance.

The two watchmen noticed something moving swiftly out of the cloud wall. Doubtless a flight of birds, running before the threatening storm. . . . It grew ever larger, with a sinister rustling, like the distant noise of a crowd. A black thing it was, moving through the blood-red sky, instinct with gore and death. . . .

The watchmen were so intent on observing this strange portent that they forgot their work. Suddenly Redec remembered the time for lighting up had come. They did their job, as per the regulation book, and went out on the balcony again, their eyes blinded with the glare of the fresh-lit blaze.

The flight had drawn nearer. With a great noise of wings brushing against each other, for they were flying in close formation, they were heading straight for the light. It was quite clear the lighthouse was their goal.

The men stepped back under the cupola. At that very moment one of the birds, seemingly the leader, dashed in full flight against the glass of the beacon, crushing itself against it like an egg.

The followers seemed to hesitate for an instant and veered to the side. They started turning round in an endless ring of living things, on which the revolving beacon threw quick flashes of vivid light.

Kerroch's hunting instincts were stirred, but he was filled with a vague uneasiness. It was night, an uncanny kind of night at that, and this enormous crowd of birds, with their weird manœuvering, caused him anxious astonishment. He fetched his gun, less for the sheer joy of killing this time, than to thin down somewhat this array of birds. Yet, even with his gun up to his shoulder, he did not fire.

As for Redec, he had been singularly uneasy ever since the two swallows had gone. He had speculated vainly over

the object, the goal, of this sudden flight. Whither indeed? Perhaps to some fabulous realm where they would call on myriads of their fellows to come avenge their wrong? What kind of birds were these, eddying endlessly round the lighthouse? It was hard to tell in the alternate darkness and blinding light. Gulls, perhaps, or cormorants, petrels, albatross? Some of each perhaps, and many other kinds besides, ill to spot, assuming gigantic, deformed shapes in the fleeting flashes.

Old memories of perils encountered, of curses realized, came crowding in upon him. . . .

"The damned swine!" muttered Kerroch.

"Shut up!" snapped Redec. "For God's sake, shut up for good, for Heaven's sake . . ."

His comrade had a nervous movement. "Why the devil should I shut up?"

Dryly, Redec replied: "'T be a lot better if you would."

It seemed almost a sacrilege to him to insult these strange beings. And little by little, Kerroch was infected with a similar fear. Redec's vehement reproaches and threats came back to his mind. True, it was a crime he had committed in slaying these young swallows. . . . He was ready to admit it now. Then he would gather himself together and tell himself only fools would believe in all this rubbish. . . . But one glance at the sinister ring still flying in wide sweep sent a renewed shudder through his frame.

The number of the phantom birds kept increasing. More came flying up, and ever more. Never, even in the migration seasons, had such a host of them been seen. Fear unseated the two men's reason; they were now positive there was something uncanny, something supernatural about the whole thing. Half-heartedly, Kerroch still from time to time tried to defend himself, to make excuses. In the end he muttered angrily:

"Ah, well, let them do their worst! I'm going to bed till it's my time for quarter watch."

Yet he remained rooted to the spot, held back by a secret fear of finding himself alone. To put a good face on it,

he added: "Don't suppose a man could sleep anyway with the racket they're making."

It was true. A new noise was now filling the air. All these birds were crying, shouting at once, and the sound grew from minute to minute. It was a storm of whistling and hissing, shrill crying and somber cooing, with an almost human note of wailing running through it all. And they flew ever faster and faster, till it made one dizzy to look at them. . . .

Kerroch made a sudden movement of anger: "This is really sickening. Wait a moment, I will help that music of yours along a bit!"

Redec saw how he took up his gun again and shouldered it. "Don't do it again!" he shouted.

"Shut up and leave me alone!"

"Have a care! No, no . . . not that . . ."

Kerroch had opened the glass door and fired, without aiming, two shots right into the seething, revolving mass. Then hastily he closed the door and waited.

The shots had found their mark in that bevy of bodies and wings, but the voids were swiftly filled and the mad band went on its dance, in narrowing circles now.

"It must be the light that draws them. I'll put the beacon out for a while," said Kerroch. He was very pale.

Redec, his honest soul aflame at the very idea of failing in their duty as lighthouse men, retorted violently:

"Ah, no. Not that. So long as I'm here, no one's going to tamper with that light!"

He was ready to defend the light with his life if need be; to him it was a sacred trust.

Kerroch went on: "Listen to their wings . . . how they rustle . . . they're close up now. . . . They hide the light from the sea anyhow . . . let's put it out just for ten minutes . . . it won't affect the shipping one bit either way, and we'll get rid of the beasts."

But Redec would not budge. He was of the breed that stays at the appointed post to the very last.

The wave of foes was already on the gallery, pressing with their bellies against the smooth glass panes. What kind of animals could they be?

Was it their long journey through space that had thus pared down the feathers off their bodies, from their knotty legs to their naked, reddish necks, hardly tinged with down? What heads were these, with beaks sharp and curved as scimitars, seeming at times like gigantic noses, black and yellow streaked? And these eyes . . . round, dilated, with a fixed, horrible stare!

Drawn by the light, they were climbing on top of one another, fighting one another for precedence, tearing lumps of flesh with their beaks and their claws. The ones in the upper layers beat their wings frantically in an attempt to climb higher still; those in the lower ranks, inextricably mixed up, bruised, covered with blood, were scratching the panes with their claws, rearing up their heads, trying to force a passage upward through this living mountain of flesh and feathers that was smothering them. Many had succumbed already. They formed at the base of this wall of intermittent light, a new wall, of seething, crushed, mangled pulp, the dregs of all this desperate fighting and agonizing endeavor.

The two men felt as if this steadily rising wall were enclosing them with the relentlessness of fate, smothering them, so they could hardly breathe and could hear the tempestuous beat of their own hearts.

For all his usual common sense, Redec was trembling with fear. Kerroch was crouching in an agony of terror; his teeth were chattering; he was incapable of speech or movement.

They felt this was some form of Nemesis; they knew themselves vanquished, crushed, utterly lost. Only a thin pane separated them from these terrible winged avengers. Some dread fate loomed over them, dark and bloody and mysterious—some fate their imagination could sense but not picture.

And suddenly a shattering smash, as of broken glass, the splinters of which themselves were being crunched and ground to dust. . . .

Under the pressure of the birds, one of the windows had given way. The winged army was crowding into the light-house . . . pressing forward like one huge, irresistible liv-

ing organism. The whole building roared with the noise of their wings and their raucous cries.

What were they to do? The breach was halfway down and cut off their retreat, for the swirling mass of the birds was engulfing itself like a flood into the staircase, preparing a close-up attack. To remain above was torture, bordering on madness, with this gruesome wall of pulp rising ever higher. . . .

The vanguard of the invaders had already entered the service room. Their tapping feet could be heard beating the floor, their great clumsy wings upsetting the furniture; their beaks clapping and cracking like whips, growing ever more numerous, filling up all space, spreading out like a flood of living lava.

Kerroch, driven mad by despair, seized a chair and started hitting out at haphazard. Suddenly he let out a yell . . . one of the birds was clinging to him, from behind, pecking at his legs. He took one leap into the struggling, seething mass that came up to his knees and joined Redec.

Terror had lent Redec superhuman strength; he had twisted and snapped off the banister of the staircase. Silently he handed a piece of it to his mate, and for a brief moment, using these as clubs, they defended the entrance to the beacon within which they sought to make a last stand.

They slaughtered countless assailants but, the more they slew, the more sprang up to renewed attack. On a heap of dead bodies, the avenging flood was sweeping ever forward.

To escape it, the two men ran round to the other side of the beacon, the torrid heat of which was scorching their faces. Hardly able to breathe in this heat they climbed up to the very top of the beacon. But the wheel, which, despite all, was still revolving slowly, hindered them and hurt their feet, and the burning hot metal caused them to let go their hold.

A new horror was added to the others. These myriads of animals flying round the flames caught fire, and a heavy, acrid smoke spread out in great volumes, stinking of roasted feathers and scorching flesh. . . . The lamp was now

burning only low, fitfully. The revolving machinery, choked up with dead bodies, stopped. . . .

They felt this dreadful death flood rising slowly, mercifully, to their waists, to their breasts, to their chins. . . . With convulsive hands they sought to defend themselves to the last . . . beating against this wall of flesh, twisting necks, gouging out eyes, breaking wings, seeking to preserve their own eyes from harm. . . . Then, suddenly, the crystal mass toppled over and crashed down, beating out the last of the flames in its fall. And night reigned, a night of horror, a night of Hell, a night of Death. . . .

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The storm that had driven the birds along was coming up with ever greater fury behind them. The roar of the victorious avengers was drowned in another, mightier roar. All the winds of the Atlantic were tearing up from their solitary haunts, gathering speed and force as they blew, till the sweep of them was invincible.

What remained of the big beacon was split, broken, dispersed as chaff or foam. Monstrous waves rolled up, disorderly and wild, with bristling crests and cavernous depths, each bearing in its flanks the very incarnation of delirious storm.

Swollen beyond all measure by the hurricane, the current that sweeps round the Roch au Diaoul seemed to gather up all these waves and launch them on a supreme assault on the lighthouse. Thunder was rolling unceasingly. Under the sheets and forks of the lightning, ten miles of angry, seething white foam glistened around. Only for brief moments, from time to time, the heavens would be dark, to start spitting out fire and fury again. Lightning and the whole force of the ocean came hurtling against the rock as twin battering rams of fate. The whole reef was shaking. Every few seconds the entire tower would disappear under a compact mass of water, a huge spout, the crest of which eagerly licked the topmost gallery. The lighthouse was in its hour of agony. It was a brief hour.

Under one blow of the sea, mightier than all others had been till then, the cupola burst. From then on, every

roller carried away some part of the structure. One smashed in the cement balcony. Another crashed through the floor of the service room, creating a great abyss through which tumbled, from floor to floor, an ever increasing mass—furniture, bodies, fixtures, stones and mortar. Three successive stabs of lightning split the walls open from top to bottom, for the lightning conductor had been torn down and swept away long before. Stone by stone, the demented waves tore the edifice to pieces. Every stone they tore, with the next sweep, they sent hurtling against what remained. Like a maddened wolf pack, the waves opened out wide their bleeding, slobbering jaws, snapping at their granite prey.

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Dawn came at last. It shed its troubled light on just a few remnants of the lighthouse walls, whence issued, like great gaunt bones, the twisted girders of the steel structure . . . all that was left of the Roch au Diaoul.

THE BRIDE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

By J. H. ROSNY AINE

(From *Les Œuvres Libres*)

I

FRANÇOIS had come to pay a visit to his aunt. Her name was Elizabeth Barsac and she lived on the slope of a lofty hill, amid olive trees, pines and fragrant plants, which produced flowers rather than fruit. From the upper story of the house, the eye roved over a rugged vista which drearily promised a desert some long day in the future. Now the fairies and goblins frolicked over the landscape, blithely careless of its destiny.

It was a morning of April when François saw once more the familiar face which, fresh and young in his childhood, had been marked by growing furrows every year, so that all his visits had, so to speak, been recorded in that beloved countenance. The beloved aunt, now in her declining years, represented for François a calendar of time. She was a refuge to which his memories clung fondly, and with her were associated all the wild dreams of his early youth.

It was only with this cherished woman that he could recall the sweet impressions, now somewhat saddened, of his boyhood days. Her dark eyes were still all fire and blaze. Her tanned and wrinkled face was still dancing with the joy of life. She was robust and vigorous, never dull and always restfully simple. She possessed no fatiguing subtlety. She loved François because she had had a hand in rearing and training him, and still more because he satisfied the yearnings of her maternal instinct, which fate had perversely refused to dower with a child of her own.

François had been in the old home scarcely an hour but, as always, he felt perfectly at home. From his chamber window he drew long breaths of repose and delight as he looked over the countryside below, which sparkled in the fresh light of April and threw far and wide its odorous balsams and fragrant perfumes. The chamber was like a little village church in Maytime, so sweet was it with blossoms, culled from slopes concealing worlds now vanished and perhaps hiding planets yet unborn.

The visitor was enchanted to his very soul as he breathed in the springtime splendor about him. He gazed far into the depths of the blue sky, in which wreaths of cloud floated like flakes of nacre. The early year stirred his reverie and filled it with vague desires, amid which, now taking form and now fading in a mist, visions of women shone and dimmed. "I have seen them before," he reflected. "Why am I not weary of them? Must my life be passed like an ironic miracle glittering with only empty fantasies? Do all these violets, and syringas, and tall, pale lilies rouse in me only a craving for flesh and perfumed human life?"

Entering the dining room, he gladly greeted his cousin Tancred, cousin of his aunt's husband, now dead. The family had come originally from the north of France. It seemed to François that he had always known Tancred, this active, quick-witted, charming and pessimistic little man. Circumstances had made Tancred a paleontologist. Digging and delving in the ground for fossils was his sole and ardent passion. He had never yet found anything but exceedingly common megalithic bones, or the simplest forms of plant life converted immortally into stone. But he was never discouraged. "Patience, patience," he would say. "Some day I shall certainly find a tall human skeleton, far older than the Solutrian period and perhaps dating even from the Mousterian age. I shall then start a scientific revolution, die famous, and great men will come to visit me as I lie asleep in my own little chapel!"

Tancred kissed François affectionately on both cheeks and observed, banteringly, "You seem to be the same whole-hearted parasite and butterfly as ever!"

"Oh, that's all life gives one. I have only two loves. I worship life and burn incense to literature. A fine occupation! Workers or pretended workers in literature are only thieves if they're not geniuses. And I never claimed to be a genius."

"Oh, you can't ever tell! Perhaps you are not yet really awake. Of course I hate literature. For me it smells of shrouds, dead men's dust, and faded words. There are plenty of interesting things to do in this world besides ransacking mummies or cheating your neighbors! Have you ever even thought of trying botany—zoölogy—natural fountains of life? Why don't you take up paleontology, now? It's inexhaustible. You just choose some fascinating epoch and go to work. You have material for a lifetime. You never grow tired—you never feel bored—you never get melancholy."

"You've told me that so many times that I am beginning to believe it," said François, helping himself to the Marseilles fish. "I shall think it over very seriously. I've lost enough time already, Heaven knows!"

"Don't think at all," advised Tancred. "Just do it. How can you enjoy your present life—your splendid and disgusting fashion of hanging about the earth?"

"Oh, well, I'm not so wholly slothful as you think, I get lots of beauty out of idleness! In fact, life is fascinating, just in living it. Sometimes it is really overwhelming."

"I understand," acquiesced Tancred. "I have been young myself. I too have lived in Arcadia. Of course you're overwhelmed, at your age. Everybody is, sooner or later. Women, of course?"

"Well, yes," admitted François. "At least, some women."

The old aunt gave an indulgent laugh. Her love experiences had been but vague and fugitive gleams, flashing across her life briefly, as ripples flash across the surface of a placid stream. But under Tancred's brows two live coals were glowing. "We are all paleontologists in a way," he commented. "We can't be happy unless we have a few symbols in our pockets—flowers transformed into coral, or caterpillars changed to butterflies."

Jellied pigeons now disappeared to make place for a rich lamb stew. Tancred and the aunt recounted the neighborhood changes which had occurred since François' last visit. Some people had died. Some folk had quitted the country. Young girl friends had become married and were matrons now. Speaking of marriage, certain scandals had it that—oh, all sorts of things. There were scandals, half-scandals, and only quarter-scandals.

"Love affairs—I mean real love affairs—don't happen here," insisted Tancred. "Here everything leads to marriage, except with the servant girls. So don't try to dig up a love affair, François, unless you want to pay a visit to the church. With us, marriage is much more serious than in the north. Women want to be taken care of. You might find romance in Aix or Arles, but not here. Just now, the only possibilities are two widows. They are both pretty, one is sick, and the other wants another husband. There is absolutely nobody here for you to play with."

"I have no desire to play with anybody," declared François.

"Play, indeed!" exclaimed the old aunt. "You don't know Tancred," and she cast at him the friendliest glance in the world. "Tancred is really terrible. It's François who is simple and sensible, after all."

"He's very sensible when he comes here," laughed Tancred. "Deadly sensible. He fits into our landscape very well."

After the meal, Aunt Elizabeth set out to wake her sleeping servants, and Tancred led François out on the balcony. "How the old times come back," said the old man, wistfully. "How you loved this garden when you were a child!"

"I always love it," replied François. "It has so many memories for me. Those pines, there, with their big arms, stretched out to gather sunlight! They haven't changed a bit!"

"No, the pines never change."

The early hawthorn was adorning itself in robes of pink and silver laces. Bindweed was gracefully entwining the young trees, and jasmine sought to hide the roughness of

an aged wall. The gaunt olive trees, the syringas, the billowing clematis, the clinging ivy, the wistaria, the ferns—all were present, as usual. In themselves, however, they were not enough. Fragrance from them supplied the otherwise lacking magic. From their commingled perfumes breathed a tyrannical, insistent, obscure and haunting life, full of restlessness, danger, menace and inexhaustible desires.

The two men walked out of the garden and into the calm, silent and austere paths of the neighborhood, bordered with sweet-smelling plants and green stretches where Melibœus' goats were still grazing. An occasional village or drowsy hamlet, almost buried in trees or shrubs, recalled forgotten market towns ruled by the ancient Romans. A woman passed by. She was dressed in white and carried a crimson parasol. François remarked the delicate outline of her face, the large, velvety eyes, and the profile which might have been that of an Artemisian nymph.

As she halted for a moment to return Tancred's greeting, her lips, coral-rose in color, parted in a smile rendered bewitching by the whitest of teeth. When she had left them behind, François, decidedly interested, demanded, "Who is that?"

"That," replied Tancred, "is the sick widow, Madame Sylvine Frangine."

"Well, she's not too sick to smile," observed François, flippantly. "The smile is perfectly healthy. It's delightful. Is she really ill?"

"Oh, yes, my friend! Very ill. They say she'll never be well again. She had two sisters—both died as she will die. Doctor Cazenave can tell you."

"Well, what's the matter with her?"

"Lungs, you know. Doubtless other complications. She knows it, but probably doesn't believe it. She is terribly afraid of death. She's somewhat melancholy by nature, and now she's rather worse because a young fellow from Avignon who was here has just left rather too hastily. Brutal, I call it. She seemed in love with him, or at least she was beginning to be. But when he found how ill she was, he ran away from her like a fox from a cage."

"Where did she come from? I don't think I have seen her before."

"She is from Arles. She inherited the villa she is living in. This climate is fine for lung trouble."

"Do you ever go to see her?"

"Not often," admitted Tancred. "She comes to Elizabeth occasionally and Elizabeth returns her visits. But she usually stays alone and acts superior. So she hasn't many friends. People are too fond of health and life here, anyway, to care much for sick folk, especially if there is any danger of contagion——"

"But there isn't!" interrupted François. "At least, there's very little. There's no danger unless people live together intimately, or unless they have some weakness already."

"Well, I don't want to investigate too closely."

François found his imagination being fed with the young woman's image through the whole long afternoon, through hours flooded with perfume and intoxicating emanations and, later, brightened by a crescent moon dancing along in a halo of mist, while stars, now hidden and now unveiled, were twinkling sympathetically. His instincts were permeated by a perverse sort of pity, a desire to console being mingled with a state half of fear, fascination touched with a mournful pleasure. Around the lights was madly fluttering a large moth of the night.

"You're absurd but you're a symbol," murmured François. "You're led to the lights by a dream. We are attracted as foolishly as you are. It's lucky we don't know it!"

These curious reflections created in François a peculiar state of well-being. It combined the reactions of a healthy body, fully prepared to enjoy life, with sensitive alertness to the unhappiness, as well as grace, inseparable from human associations with women. "Humph," he mused. "So you want to console this sick woman who is going to die!"

The possibilities of the situation scintillated like the twinkling stars. Would she let him console her? Well, women never refuse to have a friend! How many Pla-

tonic friendships had he had! And of course any relationship with this delicate soul, already condemned to death, could be only Platonic.

A week passed before he again saw the woman of his dreams. It was at a tea given by his Aunt Elizabeth. She was dressed in white *crêpe de Chine*; a hat of snowy lace wreathed her pale face, cloudlike.

There were several other visitors, so François was able to pay more attention to what she said and did.

With dark eyes, the lids translucent as the petals of a flower, her mouth indescribably bitter, her cheeks very delicate but not hollow, she reminded him of no other woman he had ever seen, although these details did not account completely for her originality. He would have thought her a mystic, had he not been disenchanted by her smile.

There were no signs that might reveal her sickness, unless perhaps certain hoarse intonations, he thought to himself. But was that a morbid indication? A good many perfectly healthy people had hoarse voices.

Aunt Elizabeth's teas, abundantly provided with all sorts of dainties, were much sought after. They were made the opportunity of real meals by the stingier of the guests: buns, tarts, cookies, goose-liver pies, ham; luscious wines, white and red port, Malaga, cherry, chypre, Malmsey, old Madeira, even Asiatic and California wines; there was great abundance of liqueurs, from cognacs, armagnacs, to raki, aguardiente, vodka, gin, whiskey, kirsch, kümmel, genievre, rum, chartreuse, benedictine, old Cure, cherry brandy, Medoc Cordial, formidable elixirs, all arranged in bottles and flasks along a huge shelf, to entice the lovers of rare drinks.

Amongst all this jovial crowd, Sylvine did not laugh very much, and there were very few present who would approach very near to her, or who would talk to her very long at a time: the holy terror of contagion kept these lovers of life at a distance. Did she notice this? A scarcely perceptible frown, passing across her pale face, led François to believe that she did.

After a chaotic series of introductions, François found

himself alone with Sylvine and Tancred, who kept up the conversation.

"This man doesn't know the South!" Tancred said. "He is always waiting for the earth to produce a miracle, not realizing that the land down here is dried up, poor, anæmic . . . each time that he visits us he is as bored as Chateaubriand was in the Holy Land."

"That is not so!" replied François vehemently. "I know very well that our country down here does not receive enough rain . . . and I am not at all disappointed. When I see all these flowers of an abundant spring, and when I breathe the perfume-laden atmosphere, I at last understand the *Felibres* fairyland."

"Yes," Sylvine answered dreamily, "these perfumes are terrible . . . they pursue you even in your dreams . . . they sing of an impossible happiness . . . they instill fear in you!"

She talked on, charming and timid, her searching gaze looking into the distance before her, and her contralto voice, just a little hoarse, moved François.

"Poor perfumes! Why be so hard on them?" Tancred added. "They don't realize what they are doing."

"The story that they tell us is too beautiful!"

"We should listen to it with children's hearts," François said. "It is enough happiness, just to believe it! . . ."

"That is the greatest happiness of all!" affirmed Tancred. . . . "Madame, the world has been harsh enough with you. It is a sin to turn away from the joys that do pass by us."

She bowed her head, smiling sadly.

"Joys and sorrows do not ask us our opinions. We are their slaves," she sighed.

"I do not deny that altogether . . . still, I deny it. The will not to suffer, the will to be care free, prepares us, not for all the joys in the world, but for a goodly share of them. It is only our cowardly abandon of our own selves that makes us lose them."

A wave of despair glowed in her eyes, as Sylvine almost moaned: "You don't know what a disease is like . . . you can't understand."

François was touched to the soul. The suffering of this beautiful woman ravaged him like a tempest and he answered, in a subdued voice:

"Oh! yes, I can very well understand . . . but all the same, you must believe what Cousin Tancred says; sickness deceives us, it tries to persuade us that it cannot be conquered."

The mystic need to believe in her salvation checked the young woman's flood of despair:

"Oh, how I wish that you were right!"

"He is right," Tancred maintained.

"Not for me . . ."

"Especially for you."

"I have the same sickness that they had . . . and you know . . ."

"Your case is not as serious . . . and we have better means of curing it; I know that they are going to try some of the recent discoveries on you . . ."

"Oh! if that were only true . . ."

"But of course it is true," François replied. "One can see plainly that you are not really very sick, if you are at all."

And he added with conviction: "You are going to get well . . . and the more you have confidence the sooner it will be."

Sylvine looked at François in pathetic astonishment.

"We are going to preach words of encouragement to you," Tancred added.

"Ah! I wish you would!"

She did not stay long after that.

"I am wondering now whether or not I did wrong in giving in to your wishes," Tancred said. "Aren't you afraid of getting into a great deal of trouble? She is very intelligent, very well educated, and very sensitive also. If she should fall in love with you, and if things didn't turn out well, look what suffering you would cause her!"

"I have no hope of her falling in love with me. . . . And if I did, I would never make her suffer!"

"She is virtuous, my dear fellow . . . like her sisters.

And, in spite of what you say, contagion is not a matter of mythology!"

"It is a myth for people with good lungs."

"Do you think so? Well, I have my doubts. . . . Why here's that confounded doctor."

A man approached them of low stature, heavy-chested, short-legged, as hairy as a bear, and the whites of his eyes scarcely showing at all.

"Doctor, here is a dissenter who refuses to believe that tuberculosis is contagious!"

"And he isn't even one of our ancestors," the doctor said teasingly.

"Why, I don't deny it at all," François protested. "I simply say that contagion does not exist for men supplied with good, strong bronchial tubes."

"Yes and no. There is little danger for such men if they are not greatly exposed to the disease. But if they should live with the patient and have very intimate relations their relative immunity may be broken down.

"Once I knew a man who was very much in love with his wife who was a consumptive. The disease lingered on for a good many years, they lived together all the time and their relations were as intimate as ever. She died four years ago and the man is still perfectly well.

"Perfectly. But I have known other men who were the picture of robust health but who have succumbed to the law of the bacilli! You must not forget that there are exceptions to every rule, my young friend."

"Is there any hope of Madame Frangine getting well?" Tancred asked.

"Her two sisters, in absolutely the same circumstances, both died."

"She doesn't look very sick," François said.

"Just like them! Theirs is an exceptional case . . . although not unique. It is our duty not to lose hope!"

"But he has given up all hope, just the same," Tancred added when the doctor had joined another group of guests. "That poor woman is condemned to death."

"Condemned to death?"

The lovely young woman evoked cemetery flowers, crypts

and old churches, the shoveling of earth and, by a subtle association, the exquisite girl prisoners condemned to death and awaiting their hour in the Terreur prisons. François was flooded with pity, with hopeless tenderness, with cruel and ephemeral longing.

He went to call on her two days after the tea at his aunt's house. She suggested that they sit on the veranda and admire the landscape together: a plain cloaked by straight pines, a russet and ashen ravine which would have been intolerably sad without the flowers which sprouted from every crevice and from each little spot of soil formed by the decayed lichens, moss and pellitories.

"From here you can see the splendid poverty of the country better than at Madame Barsac's," she said. "Yes, Provence is a condemned land . . . a future desert!"

"Who knows? Nature has so many whims. Just a few little earthquakes might supply it with rivers and deep lakes."

"Then it would no longer be Provence. But it is more logical to think of its drying up little by little, century after century . . . and finally perishing!"

"Madame, you believe too much in logic."

As in their first meetings, she enveloped her beauty in whiteness. Standing before the garden of evergreen oaks, of aloes and figs, he thought her more beautiful than ever and more incurably melancholy.

He felt perfectly at ease in her presence, a feeling of simple contentment at being alone with her. He wanted to share some of her cares.

"Have you always lived in Paris?" he asked her.

"Almost . . . I was born there."

"And your parents too?"

"Oh! No. They both came from the Provinces—my father from Ardennes and my mother from Angevin."

"Don't you get tired of living here?"

"I never get tired of living anywhere. And I have known this country ever since my early childhood. Then again, here in the South, life is not rural even in the country. Wasn't it the Englishman, Sir Barclay, who said: 'There are only two people who are cultured by nature: the Pro-

vençal people and the Ligurians'? I think that is true, although that is not the reason why I never grow tired of living here. I am very seldom bored anywhere."

"Have you a happy nature?"

"No, I am naturally sad."

"But are you unhappy?"

"No. For the last two years I have been as happy as it is humanly possible for any one to be."

"Then I don't understand you. . . . But I imagine that you are both happy and unhappy at the same time."

"But you surely don't think that sadness and unhappiness are the same?"

"Almost the same thing."

"We have so many contradictions in ourselves. . . . My tendency to being sad seems to be checked by an exaggerated love of life . . . I am terribly fond of living!

"Oh, how I love life!" she sighed, after a brief pause. And then, almost in a whisper:

"O Lord; O Lord! Why have you abandoned me?"

A shadow crossed her feverish countenance. Then, smiling pitifully, looking up into the immeasurable space:

"I am wildly in love with life! Oh! the early morning sun, the cooling breeze on sultry afternoons, the majestic tempests, the mighty northwest wind . . . and the mute beings that sprout out of the earth . . . and the divine month of April with its divine youth and freshness! Oh, to think of leaving all that . . . to feel the blighting breath . . . to listen in terror to a heart that will soon cease its beating!"

She looked down at her white arms, that resembled living flowers and running water; the knell of a sob choked her.

"To think that they will be rotting soon!"

"Oh! no . . . no!" he cried in a fit of compassion . . . "that is not true . . . your heart is going to beat for a long time yet . . . you have a long, full life before you."

"Ah, if you had only known the years that I have lived! Oh! how young and fresh and charming they have been!"

"You mustn't give in like that. Hope is a healer!

Besides, there are new cures, almost certain . . . which your doctor is studying and is going to apply to you. Enjoy the beautiful mornings and the beautiful nights . . . you must live."

"Oh! if I only dared believe you!"

"You must believe me . . . it is your duty to believe me!"

He pressed Sylvine's slender hand like an older brother, seized by an emotion in which sex played scarcely any rôle at all.

"You must promise to believe me," he continued. "You know that every one who has paid any attention to the question has noticed that faith needs supporters!"

"Promise to believe!" she said, smiling undecidedly. "Can one do such a thing?"

"It is only a matter of will: at bottom, all beliefs begin by one's choice . . . in other words, an act of will."

A slight expression of mistrust came into her eyes.

"Why are you interested in me?"

"I really cannot say. Partly, certainly, because you are young and charming and it's fate! . . . But there are other things, undefinable, the secret of affinities, an instinct of sympathy for those who suffer. . . . Oh! it is not merely a vague altruism, that leads me to be interested: it must be a definite being, and definite circumstances."

"And deliberately telling a lie."

"But rest assured that I am not acting with any hidden motives. . . . I am certainly not intending to make love to you . . . I would like to be simply your friend."

"That would be too beautiful."

"But it is the truth. Even if I became too strongly attracted to your charms, even though I should fall in love with you, if you didn't love me in turn, I would none the less remain your friend!" He said this with a vehemence which this time was not lacking in sincerity.

"But can any one be sure of such things?"

"I can!"

She gave him her hand, saying as she did so:

"I am not sure yet. . . . But surrounded as I am by honest people who haven't really any love for me at all

... and who are even afraid of me, I am terribly anxious to believe you."

She was standing under the half-shadow of a silken parasol. Her delicate and melancholy soul, aloof from evil, and from people and even from destiny, abandoned itself to a dream in which François occupied the center. Physically she neither particularly liked him nor did she dislike him. He was not the one she would have chosen if she had been seeking a lover. But her only desire was to escape from her tragedy a little, and there was not a soul, not even Tancred, entrenched as he was in his old friendships and no longer able to form new ones, willing to expend any affection upon her. Almost all of them, wholly engrossed in living, were afraid of the mysteries hidden in contagion; and even those who yielded to Sylvine's charm did not tarry long; others, more bold, who did not fear contact with her, were not themselves appealing to her.

"Is he going to make love to me?" she sighed.

A shudder passed through her. She called to mind the *other one*, whom she had already loved, and who probably loved her, and who had fled as one would flee from a sepulcher. To make love to her was almost to do her a favor. The thought was so hateful to her that her eyes filmed with tears; she was nearly overcome with sadness, clinging to a mere thread of hope, almost without desires, yet fearfully in love with life.

He took his leave of her, walking along the perfume-laden, desert-like countryside, with the well-being of a healthy body and a well commenced adventure.

"Haven't I as good a chance with her as I had with the others? Even more perhaps, for it is not only a lover, but a life which is abandoning her . . ."

A little shudder at the thought of being the only one to fill her existence, a sincere feeling of tenderness and compassion. Hidden in psychic mist, the allure of sickness and death, of a fevered body, and a terrified soul.

"And with all the others, it was always something perfectly normal," he said to himself. "I never could do them any harm; I always offered them something better than

they ran any chance of losing. . . . But I must be very careful not to give this woman any cause for suffering! My perversity is acceptable, if it is harmless. . . . But this poor woman must not suffer because of me . . ."

Then the following thoughts occurred to him:

"Look out, my young fellow, for your responsibility to yourself. There are things that would be very difficult for you to pardon yourself. If she should fall in love with you, you would have to be ready to make some great sacrifices. . . . You might even lose your freedom! . . . and you know that your freedom is the most cherished thing that you possess . . ."

The hidden irony that accompanied these words did not prevent them from being as sincere as conversations can, when addressed to one's self.

They saw each other again, at first as often as custom permitted, then a little more. François grew more and more attracted physically; with Sylvine it was at first a friendship that might just as easily have been for another woman as for a man. She loved sweet conversations and the presence of a person who treated her as a friend, who was not terrified at the thought of being near her.

This presence grew more and more necessary to her each day. François found a mystic pleasure in developing the fruits of confidence in Sylvine's soul. He also enjoyed the simple play of his natural and acquired qualities of consolation.

By his mere presence, her fear of death lessened and evaporated; he always left her with a feeling of hope.

His attitude was so carelessly brotherly that Sylvine was at first surprised and then vaguely worried. Her sickness, far from decreasing her femininity, only increased it. She longed more for love now than she had before she was sick, or before she knew that she was sick, only now she had greater need than ever of feeling that others were sensitive to her charms; and the fear that she inspired only pity or even dislike was a poignant humiliation to her. She grew to believe that François shared, at least in part, this same coldness towards her, and she searched in his

movements, in his looks, in his voice, for a trace of this impression. François often stood close beside her and, in her endeavor to discover his repulsion, she would turn her face up to his when she talked, but she could see no sign of aversion on his part.

Then she began to imagine that she scarcely pleased him, either because she simply was not to his taste, or else because he was not inclined to love a sick person, whether the sickness were contagious or not. So, according to her mood, she would either grow sad or assume an air of indifference, which wounded him more and more.

She had never been a really intimate friend with any man. Before her sickness there had been no lack of men who, more or less hypocritically or more or less lightly, had expressed their desire for her. But never had there been anything like the conversations that she had with François: they had either been insipid or stupid, exchanges of news or gallantries. . . . Only with him had she expressed her secret aspirations and even her deepest feelings about certain books, especially her love for Loti, for the Chateaubriand of the "Mémoires d'Outre-tombe," for the Countess de Noailles, for Gérard d'Houville, for all those who bring a great deal of nature into their writings, and who have an acute appreciation of death.

One afternoon he found her, bathed in tears, holding in her hand "Jeune Fille."

In response to his anxious look, she held up the book and said:

"Look at this."

He read:

"Her inexorable hour had sounded in the eternity that respects neither childhood nor youth. . . . A few convulsions, a slight relaxation, a little hand seizing mine more tightly and a gentle head bending toward me, her astonished expression suddenly becoming fixed, her mouth partly open . . ."

"That has affected me terribly!" she said.

"Why should it? It has no more to do with you than with the toughest peasants whom you see walking along the road down there. It concerns me fully as much as it

does you! It refers to the death that threatens everybody, and not the one that you are afraid of, because you think it is an exceptional one. . . . Here . . . let us read on:

"I did not know, O Lord! that such a delightful and such a tender being, so full of divine promise, was not subject to your special protection, and would not be miraculously saved, more than the others . . . I never knew that just one night, one day, one hour, was enough to pass so calmly and so naturally from the realm of life to this dark exile of death . . ."¹

"No, that has nothing to do with you; you are not like that heroine of another story who, full of youth and strength, and beautiful and charming and beloved, thinks of nothing but death."

"I know!" Sylvine whispered . . . "I know . . ."

She picked up the book that he referred to and read:

"Do you not feel it, at every move, steal into you and devour you? It has no ending. It is forever watching: life is nothing but confusion and slowness. Death drives it along as the wind drives clouds along the side of a mountain. Listen, and you will hear the cries of the Dead shouting within you . . ."²

"That concerns you even less than the other! . . . For if some one should say to you: 'You are entirely cured and a long life is in store for you!' you would never think about death, or hardly ever, and then, without terror."

"Yes, that is true," she sighed. "Even if some one were to tell me: 'You are going to live for twenty years yet, in the same condition that you are now in,' I would be greatly consoled."

"Well, I tell you: you are going to live and be cured! Because of your youth and also because the remedy is near!"

"You believe in remedies!"

"Of course I do. I always have. But I have written to my doctor, in whom I have great confidence: he wrote and answered me that the serum is a marvel. So I beg of

¹"Jeune Fille," by Gérard d'Houville.

²"Les deux Femmes," by J. H. Rosny.

you, have just a little hope, that is the only thing that will save you."

He spoke fervently and pathetically, his eyes burning with emotion, giving color to his ordinarily calm face. The woman felt a tenderness resembling the green blades of young grain.

"Yes, the serum! It's a good bracer . . . but Maurac is very doubtful about it. He can't see any change for the better," Tancred said through the cloud of smoke which rose from his cheap cigar.

"But," inquired François, "isn't it too soon to take a definite stand?"

"Not according to Maurac. He's tried everything. It's quite useless. It is almost better not to prolong the agony. We haven't got control of that confounded germ yet."

Tancred puffed silently at his ill-smelling cigar. "I didn't know you were as interested as all that in her," he said after a few moments of reflection.

"In the eyes of this village, you're either going to compromise her or you have got to play up as her fiancé. I think it just as well to warn you."

"What the devil do you meddle in this for?" cried the young man jokingly.

"There is not a hamlet in all of France where people don't meddle in others' affairs. So your observation . . ."

"Is premature. Do you propose to give me advice?"

"I wonder if I should. At any rate, it will not be without your permission."

"I have always considered you as a clever fellow. So I wouldn't mind having your advice."

"Ah, but a really clever man never gives advice."

"Even if they insist on having it."

"All the more if they insist. But, since I'm not an ace of aces, I should like anyway to give you a tip. First, let me ask you a question. Do you love Madame Frangine? Don't let me go on if you are madly in love with her."

"I like Madame Frangine very much, but I'm not yet wild about her."

"So you can still think. Then, if you have decided not

to fall madly in love with her, you would do better not to see her. I told you already, you know, that she is suffering from your absence."

"That is a reason for my continuing to see her."

"I haven't said anything. Excuse my meddling. . ."

"She makes me sorry for her . . . because you have pity on her. Be sure, Cousin Tancred, that I won't make her suffer."

"You are not falling into the abyss of love that I had thought. If I pitied her I ought to pity you, too. Nothing more terrifying, I imagine, than to love a woman who is certain to die. I can't understand it. That, having loved her when she was healthy, one continues despite her sickness, yes! But to know that a woman is afflicted by an incurable and contagious disease, to know that each day the breach between you becomes wider, to know that she is being devoured alive by germs, and then still to love her, *that is love*. Why, it is almost as unbelievable as if one loved a mummy. To think I took you for a normal mammal!"

"Normal!" cried François. "Cousin Tancred, man is an abnormal beast in all which separates him from the others. Love at all seasons, love hidden by dreams, morals, customs, tradition, law, the knowledge of another world—pity and art, art the invader which betakes of every act of the civilized man—civilization. . . . Love for a sick girl, love for one condemned to die, is human, quite human."

"Superhuman," asserted Tancred. "Come, you are not a vulgar romanticist. Even they did not know what happens to the bronchia of a tubercular girl! Well, there is a François who is a stranger to me, a François madly in love! You don't think I would dare give you any advice?"

"But," protested François, "I am not already madly in love."

"You are at the threshold. The door will open and you will enter at least, unless, as the old man said, a good bit of despair doesn't come to your aid."

This conversation stimulated François' ideas strangely and drew him far more closely to Sylvine.

He found her sitting in the shade. The snowlike appear-

ance of her clothes and her ghostlike pallor caused him to murmur:

"Elle viendrait du fond de l'allée automnale
Blanche, pure, et nimbee de grace virginale
Et sous la feuille rousse et rameaux mouraunts
Trainant a petits pas l'amour et le printemps."

He held her little hand longer than usual.

"Who wrote that?" she queried.

"It's by an unknown person."

He regarded Sylvine's face with a critical eye. Where was the trace of the Horror of Horrors? The refined cheeks, eyes of brown and yellow flame, the color. Perhaps this slight twitching of the nostrils, but the delicate neck, as round as the neck of the celebrated Shulamite; her nymphlike arms showed no trace.

"Candide Naiad."

"You make me think of the white Naiad, who used to pick violets and sunflowers."

"Who is this naiad?"

"Oh, a naiad of olden time, who combined the narcissus with the fragrant fennel. In this Latin country, you know, Latin figures and images emerge from the very soil."

"And you mean?"

"You know very well what I mean. I mean that you inevitably suggest the naiad, who in turn arouses the thought of youth and enchantment."

"Really?" she smiled, delightfully charmed and feeling a velvety warmth flowing over her skin. "You are complimenting me! But you are very stingy with your compliment!"

"My remark was not a compliment—it only conveyed an impression."

"That is much better!"

Their looks met, but swerved aside. In that meeting, however, suddenly become embarrassing and disturbed, lay the eternal note of understanding always flashing into such encounters.

"I know I ought not to talk to you about such things," he said, "for I promised to be your friend, and to remain

always within the limits of simple friendship. I am sorry."

Her head drooped, the pink color of the eglantine upon her cheeks.

"Oh, you are not importunate—sometimes I think I am not the kind of woman for you—I mean I should like—should like——" She hesitated, her neck now as rosy as her cheeks. "I prefer a friendship which is not like a mere ordinary friendship between man and man or woman and woman——"

He trembled slightly. "That would be even finer. And why not? You have only to command!"

"Command?"

"Why, surely! It shall be exactly as you like—friendship between man and woman, or unlimited tenderness—love with friendship or love with passion."

"But is that possible? If you can resist complete love today, how do you know you can tomorrow?"

"I have known all about it from the first. After all, it is not so complicated! At least, not for me! We all have within us many latent forces, many sentiments which are only half aroused, and we all know that more or less. I am sure I know it very clearly indeed. I have never been unaware that I have been ready to love you madly. Only a word is needed to release all the power which I have been restraining."

She hid her face, seized, as she was, with a sudden and devouring intoxication. He saw her young breast rise and fall in a flutter which made him dizzy.

"How strange you are!" she murmured.

"Not strange at all—entirely natural, but a little more sincere than most men."

A whirlwind was bearing Sylvine onward in its course. She felt the force of the chaos, the tempest, the loosing of primitive energies. In the space of a few moments, this man, the only man who had spoken frankly, the only man who had entered her drama boldly and tenderly, had precipitated her destiny. How fearful she now is of losing it! Ah! Let him console and save her! Let him be the one whom, within the uncharted desert of her soul, every

woman awaits! This is the moment when circumstances combine, when dreams dreamed apart unite, when obscure vows and the terrible appeal of happiness seek expression irresistibly. Words escape her which are not weighted and guarded by careful thoughts, words which mount as from abysses.

"Suppose I tell you that I feel the need of being loved?"

"Oh!" he implored, leaning toward her with outstretched hands, "if you feel that need, say but a word and I am yours, with all I have in me!"

"Mine, with your whole being?"

"My whole being."

She uttered a happy cry and held out her pale little hand, on which he placed devouring lips.

"I was hiding my love from you," he whispered, "for I did not wish to force you against your will. I love you, Sylvine, with a tender, patient and devoted love, but with a love which has all the desire and passion conceivable for your very self!" He caught her to himself. His kisses mounted along her arm to her shoulder, lingered in her warm and dainty neck, and finally found the consenting lips of Sylvine.

He is again upon the road, still filled with intoxication. Now he plunges into his sensations, now he summons his mind to rescue him. That kiss unites him to a woman as no other kiss has ever yet done. No other woman's kiss has had the power now revealed. With other women, the future remained uncompromised, without obligation as without promise. Now a single meeting of the lips has created a latent contract, and no halfway measures will suffice.

In the momentary exaltation, the idea of sacrifice renders the falling evening more exciting and casts a spell over these places whose charms are more clearly revealed by the softened light, whose virgilian shadows are visibly creeping over the hills and villages, beneath the falling of the perfumed dew.

"I must spare her every suffering," he whispers to himself, enjoying the physical decline which makes her so lovely and stirred at the same time by a new, perverse and

fragile sensuality created by the unhealthy flesh and by the menacing death summons. The seduction of the final dirge penetrates to his very marrow and words of the funeral liturgy ascend from the depths: "For ye shall be no more remembered in death—Lord, grant them thy eternal rest!"

Within the veranda where the hyacinths bloom sweetly, a tiny human creature is dreaming wildly. The whole world has enlarged. The prospect hitherto enclosing Sylvine tightly, like a confining wall, now opens upon immense vistas. Since the miserable flight of that other man, she remained alone and forsaken amid those who fled her presence or kept a formal distance from her. She has felt herself imprisoned in the narrow way leading down into eternal night. Not an evening but chanted to her the funeral service, not an evening but tolled for her a knell whose terror swept her aloft into the chill eternal spaces. Her very bed-clothing had become for her a shroud to enclose her, as her sisters had been wrapped, for the final limitless slumber. The light morning breezes, purified by their night beneath the stars, could hardly offer her more than a niggardly promise, which was always soon withdrawn.

Yet, in spite of all, fatality was inseparable from her. In the midst of her distress she had been granted the warmth of possible joy. Life was burgeoning on the hillsides, and sparkling streams spoke of renewed existence. From distant lands François has come to her, bringing with him migratory birds, fond promise, and consolation. The period of suffering is now gone by, and an epoch of love is now resounding throughout Sylvine's universe. "O Lord," she sighs, "let all this be no mistake!"

She does not really think she will be mistaken. She places her full confidence in the man who is assuming the form of fate. In the gathering dusk, before the glowing fire which shines luridly into an abyss, she revives hopes which she has not until now dared to evoke without a tremor. She sees a twilight lost in clouds. The earth is reaching out towards the starry vault above, an icy vault between which and the world is interposed only a thin

layer of air. Turning toward the hundred appearing and dissolving visions lying far to the west, vast as looming archipelagoes, Sylvine no longer even notices that she coughs.

She is like a young girl, quitting childhood, entering womanhood and encountering love for the first time. The love she knows now is really wholly new. Her young husband had brought to her only a soul which was poor and cold. Positive and precise as he had been, his conception of existence was scarcely superior to a dog's idea of life. The second so-called lover had fled from her, furtively and shamefully. She desires ardently to believe in François. She does believe in him; and, in the interval between sunset and twilight and between twilight and the appearance of the night's first stars, she will have transformed and ennobled him through her own creativeness.

"Madame," says the maid, coming with a shawl, "the coolness of the evening is here." The maid, a devoted woman, some forty years old, has no fear of contagion.

"Thank you, Juliette," replies Sylvine as the maid spreads the shawl over her shoulders.

Reëntering the house, she views the lights of night, always beloved, through the clear window panes. Only yesterday, the slow death of the twilight, diminishing like fading ashes, seemed a gloomy tragedy. The fear she felt of it sometimes flowed insidiously through her veins like a venom, or, again, fell suddenly upon her with a heavy weight of terror.

Tonight she feels only a delicate and tender melancholy, lighted by illusory fires. The planet Venus becomes indeed the star of the goddess herself. The terrible world which was slowly crushing Sylvine out of existence seems now a world of enchantment, peopled by ardent souls. Minute by minute, François becomes more and more intimately woven into the night. He is a messenger of fate, who is to sustain the edifice which has been tottering upon the sands.

II

François was now coming to see her every day. She at first received him in a little salon, where they first tasted

the strange ecstasy of a kiss, an ecstasy which is almost symbolic and of which whole human races remain ignorant. She soon resorted to the garden, for she desired to prolong the early days of the wooing. In the garden, where they were not alone, the wooing was limited to words.

Desire grew intenser less in François than in Sylvine, who experienced the ardor imparted by the wasting affection which she had to endure. However, she belonged, as Tancred had said, to a race whose women insisted on the traditional rites. A true believer, in spite of occasional departures from the pathway, she wished to have her love consecrated by the Church.

Nothing in her past life resembled this sudden flame which kindled every nerve of hers. The dry caresses of her husband had been really unpleasant. As for the lover who had failed her, he had gone no farther than words, desire remaining fitful, ill-defined and smothered in an incoherent sentimentality. Her few moments of desire had been fleeting, imperfect, only half in bloom. François' kiss revealed a completed and entire love and desire, fanned into flame by her disease. If she experienced a wonderful enchantment, she also felt a sense of peril which she sought to exorcise.

Entering by the veranda one day, he reached her side before she was aware of his presence. "What are you dreaming of?" he asked.

She replied, with entire simplicity, "Of you!" And while he was still under the spell of her charm she observed, with a malicious little laugh, "It is becoming unbearable. I think of you all the time." He seized her. Their mouths were joined in an outburst of desire like the voluptuous tyranny of animal passion, wholly free from mystical sentiment. Her light garments slipped down upon her smooth skin, revealing contours hitherto concealed. In a moment of delirium, he raised her in his arms, and she abandoned herself in his embrace. As he was about to carry her away, however, a revulsion of feeling overcame her.

"Oh, no, no!" she begged. "No! not like that. I believe in God, François. I must not be obliged to feel repentance

for a sin." She hid her face in the young man's breast and sobbed, "I love you devotedly, François, as I have never loved any one—you are my first real love. What shall I do? I cannot—I must have God's consent."

He heard her plaintive voice with pity and with passion, a brotherly gentleness swept through his frame, and he was filled with delight at finding Sylvine so ardent, yet so pure.

"Ah, my dear one," he cried, "I can do nothing to make you unhappy and how glorious it will be to have you for my wife!"

"Truly?" she cried, wholly dazzled. "You want me to be your wife? Ah, François, I did not know what true happiness is!"

She clasped the young man's hands against her breast. Everything yet imperfect in her illusion vanished like the mists of night in a sunny valley. She now believed in a protracted existence, a slow and luminous destiny marching toward the period of old age which she had so despaired of ever attaining, an old age which seemed to her less the end of life than a safe mooring in a restful harbor.

"Only, your love must not be a sacrifice," she murmured.

"It is a burning flame!"

"Burning flame," she repeated, in ecstasy. "How I shall count the days!"

III

A week later, François returned from Paris, where he had completed official necessities. The morning was cool, a thin vapor was fading in the valleys and dying out upon the hillsides. In spite of himself, a feeling of pessimism made the young man shiver. Was he not, after all, committing a slow suicide?

His cousin Tancred met him at the station. "You're really going to do this crazy thing?" he asked.

"Yes, no matter how crazy it may be," answered François. "I should be an ignominious brute if I took back my word now. And why is it so crazy, anyway?"

"It would be a crazy thing for me, were I still young enough for such a thing! But if I'd given my word like you, I'd keep it like you."

"I have only one fear, Tancred. Do you think all this will do her no harm?"

"I have consulted Diafoirus, and he thinks that it makes no difference. The thing is settled. It is better to go ahead and finish joyfully."

"You think the inevitable must happen?"

"More than ever. The wonderful serum has no effect at all. It is perhaps even harmful. Eternity is approaching and she isn't thinking of it at all. Your mad folly will be the greatest of blessings for her. As for you——"

"I accept my destiny," said François.

"Is it possible that you have a real love for her?" demanded Tancred, involuntarily, and with a curiosity mingled with repugnance.

"She's charming, isn't she?"

"Alas, yes—but this disease—its poisons . . ."

"I like her better for it, perhaps."

"I don't understand—I can't understand. But you're not too tired?" Tancred was afraid he might have wounded François.

"No. I slept in the train better than I thought I should."

Aunt Elizabeth greeted François as if he were affected with an incurable disease. She looked at him uneasily and pityingly. She spoke to him in a low, gentle voice. When lunch was over, though, she asked him, "Have you fully reflected, François?"

"There is no use in reflecting any more, dear Aunt," he rejoined, rather annoyed.

"Well, I shall pray to God and the Virgin to keep you from harm!"

She kissed him. Her eyes were full of tears, for she had invested all her capital of tenderness in François and Tancred.

Until he reached Sylvine's house, the young man's mood was rather gloomy, but at sight of the garden near the bend in the road a happy wave swept over him. Sylvine was awaiting him. She was a little thinner, a little lighter, and her eyes were bright with emotion, with fever and with the bistre which she had applied to them. The king of terrors was rustling at her skirts, but when François clasped

her to him, as she was trembling with her love, when their lips met, the voluptuousness they experienced was even more fervent because of a sinister element in it.

"Ah," she sighed. "What a joy, and how I have trembled!"

"Trembled? What were you afraid of?"

"Absence is always a menace! You were away in that city which attracts and fascinates every one, where you have so many associations. How could I know what suggestions you might receive, away in Paris?"

"I couldn't have received any bad suggestions! I had my love with me, and that itself is in love with love."

"Were you still in love with me when you were away?"

"Why, didn't I go there to possess you! Everything is ready, my dearest. And here?"

She clung to him, trembling with delight, in a delirium of gratitude. "Oh, here, everything has been very simple. Ah, it is really going to happen—this immense dream is really going to be fulfilled! I am going to love you with the approbation of God!"

Her cough struck upon his soul, dry, hoarse and deep. The knell again! A word of ferocity mingled with his dream of joy, and he felt the limitless pain which surges within the hearts of the condemned.

"Oh, it's nothing," she whispered, when the attack had passed. "I am ever so much better."

She believed it, poor, hypnotized creature; and he, seized with a wave of pity, placed fiery little kisses on her hair, her eyes and her neck, with an intermingling of every feeling that love could ever know.

The civil and religious wedding ceremonies occurred on the same morning. According to Sylvine's wish, they were accomplished furtively and almost clandestinely, and in a way which Aunt Elizabeth approved of, because she considered the marriage a catastrophe.

A limousine bore the couple to a melancholy villa, not far from the sea, where Sylvine had passed marvelous vacations in times gone by. A fringe of sycamore enclosed a disheveled garden in which were growing Provence roses, jasmine, and iris, mingled with a few wild yuccas and three

old palm trees which had been brought from Algeria at the time of Napoleon III.

The only servant in the place was the woman of forty who, at least so far as she was concerned, did not believe in contagion. She served them a very simple lunch and vanished when they had had coffee.

To that moment, by a tacit understanding, François and Sylvine had kept themselves under restraint. She had coughed a few times, without seeming to pay any attention to it. Now, alone together, they remained silent for a moment, seized with embarrassment, as if astonished to find themselves together and free to belong to each other as they would. This experience was wholly unlike any which François had ever known. This woman, now bound to him by social consent and religious faith, appeared of a race different from that of other women. Far from being rendered submissive to him by the marriage, she seemed to him entirely free, and he took pleasure in the thought.

During this moment of waiting, they felt strangely apart, afraid, fearful, and ashamed, as if they had never exchanged kisses and words of love. It cost François an effort to take Sylvine's hand and murmur, "How sweet it is to be in this house, where you lived when you were a little girl! Nowhere could I feel nearer to you—very close to you."

Every feeling of embarrassment instantly vanished. Sylvine's eyes grew wider. He saw the iris dilate about the black pupil like the expanding petals of a flower, and her delicate breast began to rise and fall.

"Now?"

"With all my soul and body!"

He lifted her gently, clasped her against his breast, and carried her out of the room.

The happiness felt by Sylvine filled François with joy. As the weeks fled by, love enveloped them like an emanation from heaven and earth. She possessed infinite reserves of sentiment and had all the graces of a young being who has awaited love for a long time without finding it. Youthful innocence was combined with the subtlety common to sick people plunged in solitude and suffering, who know

every mysterious reaction of their bodies, and who see through every pretense and reticence of those about them. Besides all this, Sylvine was poetic, not like those who scribble their dearest secrets forth in the frightful effort of the artist, but as one who lives his poetry and mingles it subtly with every sensation and every act.

She brought to bear on François things possible and things of the faith, voluptuousness and purity, desire and withdrawal. His instinct of imparting solace, enhanced by experience, caused him to lend himself either to the ardor created by her disease or to her gentle reveries. For this reason he constituted an almost divine incarnation for her.

Every day he loved more deeply his fragile comrade, doomed to certain death. Not a gesture of hers but reminded him of the pitilessly approaching moment. When, as if utterly crushed by anguish, she took refuge in him and sought protection against destruction in caresses, he was seized with a strange pity, uniting in a sinister mixture with horror and voluptuous feeling.

At first, the disease seemed to recede. But it returned abruptly, the fever increased, and the physician could not hide his fears of terrible complications. From that time onward, emaciation became rapid, the cough grew sharper, and little hemorrhages began to occur. An extraordinary beauty enveloped the poor woman. François watched her with terrified delight. His dread was like that felt by mothers whose lovely little ones must perish.

However, despair had not yet seized upon Sylvine. When the attacks were over she would murmur, nestling close to him, "I can never die while you are with me. We must live a long time together because you love me—a long, long time!" And, to reassure herself, she sought love's supreme caress. François, gloomily exalted by her mood, could only give it, to plunge straightway in a sadness which rendered the whole world an immense tomb.

The physician had warned him that a collapse might occur at any moment. The man was an accomplished specialist. At a seaside resort not far away he was in daily contact with every form of tuberculosis. He feared a rapid

close and could not conceal his fear from the young husband.

"Is there nothing to be done—nothing at all?" begged François.

"I have tried every means which science is acquainted with. We have not many sure weapons, for our knowledge of this disease is sadly lacking. It is so complicated and has so many different aspects. In this case, unfortunately, the poor victim's defense is very weak. The organism does not react well. It only helps the microbes do their work. It offers them a favorable soil. You must surely know that the cells of the tuberculous are only too likely to compromise with the enemy!"

"So there is absolutely no hope?"

The physician looked François full in the eye. "Do you want cheering illusions?" he demanded, gruffly.

"I want the truth!"

"That is much better—except for *her*, of course. Well, the disease is rapidly progressing. It is a military form, and advances very fast. With your wife's temperament, it may end suddenly. You must be very careful . . ."

That day Sylvine was exhausted by the cough, the hemorrhages and the fever. François found her lying on a couch placed in sight of the garden, where the flowers were bursting forth in lavish display, where life was multiplying in a frenzy of fruits and seeds. She herself was just emerging from a deathly moment. A funeral knell was resounding in her breast. Her burning hand, which would soon be as cold as a stone, clasped François' hand in a mad despair. Nature, the very same Nature which was destroying her, as it destroyed the tiny insects in the grass, rendered the process inconceivable and intolerable for the young man.

"Oh, my dearest! How afraid I was," she whispered, "while you were coming! It seemed as if you had disappeared into a distant world, that I could not reach you, and that I would die without ever seeing you again. You cannot imagine such a dreadful feeling—never to see you again!"

"It is very bad for you to think of death so, dear child!"

"Yes, I know it is bad for me. I ought not to. Your presence drives the thought away. Ah, François! Your presence—it is life to me—it drives away all my fear—I want to believe that I am going to live."

"You must be sure of it, Sylvine—as sure as I am!"

"You are sure?" she cried, eagerly. "Put your arm around my waist and say it again."

"I am sure, my dearest one." And he put his arm around her yielding body, fully realizing its frightful fragility. Pity swept over him like a great billow, and, as though every human sorrow were released upon him, he covered Sylvine with slow kisses, kisses of deadly terror.

"There! my happiness has come back," she murmured. "You are my force and courage. Your wife is just your child and, when you hold her close to you, all the world's cruelty cannot touch her!"

Her eyes, splendid and sinister, fixed themselves upon him with feverish exaltation and with a joy which made him think of the fitful sparkle of the evening star when just sinking low in the west.

"Tell me once more, my dearest—tell me that you love me."

He answered, in dreadful consternation, "I love you, dear heart."

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes!"

She lifted her lips to his. Those burning lips drank in love as they would a magic potion. Pressing close to him, she sought, to be surer of living, the supreme expression of life. François recoiled, in horror.

His horror, though somewhat fainter, persisted throughout the following day. He beheld, too constantly, death in his living wife and, while it did not cause him to lessen his tenderness, the painful impression rendered his senses inert. When she pressed close to his side and put up her lips to his, he shivered as if she were to grow cold and stiff in his arms. His sacrifice seemed no longer possible. Fortunately, she underwent a period of weakness in which she sought gentleness rather than passion.

When she grew a little stronger, François recovered the force required to reassure her, but was soon seized with

mortal sadness. At moments when his sentiments were stronger than his conscience, he felt when, without desiring Sylvine's death, he realized that it must be near, a sense that he would be released from torture. He blamed himself for this feeling, repulsed the cruel vision, and sometimes succeeded in banishing it for a time. However, it continued to slip insidiously in upon him, reappearing when least expected. It did not diminish his affection for Sylvine; and when he saw her poor, wasted body and her great, pathetic eyes, and when her dear heart beat against his own, he fully realized that no human circumstance could separate him from her before the formidable hour should come.

"Never, never!" he whispered. "Whatever Fate's decree, she shall never suffer through me!"

The part he had to play became more painful as the time continued. He had to conceal a tragic pity and simulate desire at the same time. He would have betrayed himself had not the physician come to his aid. A skilled psychologist, and aware of the ardent passion occurring in cases like this, he soon divined the truth and, pretending to begin a new treatment, ordered absolute rest. To strengthen the effect, he said that the prescription might be discontinued after a few weeks. "You have need of all your strength to resist these last severe attacks," he explained. "If you will only rest, you will improve." For in him, accustomed as he was to visit the dying, a sort of irony was mingled with his pity—an irony without cruelty for a man to whom the life of men, as the life of beasts, often seemed both miserable and derisive.

"These last attacks?" she queried, in supplication. "Will they really be the last ones?"

"Yes, the very last," he replied, assuming a surly air, "provided you will be good and obedient. Sick people must be docile."

"Oh, I will be docile! Oh, doctor! Only cure me!"

"Cure you, my child!" exclaimed he, touched by the pretty creature's grace. "We shall do everything possible for that." And, turning toward François, he added, "I count on you as well!"

He disappeared. Confidence imparted new life to the expiring form whose eyes, full of sinister hope and beautiful as the forests are when touched by the autumn with impending death, were fixed sadly upon François.

"Oh, my dear, my dear, when I am cured, we must take a long trip together."

"Yes, indeed, dear child, we will have a long journey."

"Oh, how lovely that will be!"

Strangest of all human things, this mere fable, rendered so real by constant repetition, almost displaced the true realities and shone hopefully forth from her dilated pupils. She stretched out her arms to him. As he clasped her to him, he had a frightful sense of embracing a corpse.

The slow and heavy days poured forth into eternity their hours, their minutes and their seconds. François saw death fastening itself ever more firmly upon Sylvine. He beheld her dying in the daylight, he heard her dying in the shadows of night. In order not to frighten her he had avoided calling any nurse, depending only on the maid, who, happily, proved vigilant, adroit and full of goodwill.

Every morning, his poor wife seemed nearer death. At night, the attacks of cough knelled forth the funeral of his loved one. Then, sitting near her, he beheld the human multitudes disappearing into the depths of the ages, into the deserts of empty space, man never ceasing for an instant to perish, the tears of the sick never separated from the groans of the dying by the smallest interval of time. In the sea's abysses, in the great forests, in the wide prairies, among the green leaves, or amid the tender plants, always some creature or other was surrendering to things the mysterious energies which it had received from things.

Never, forever, forever, never! With what precision did he perceive his own inevitable death! What hideous and abominable consciousness did he possess of the fragility of his own organism, what cries from his overwrought nerves, what despairing beats of his heart!

"The inexorable night must come, and so quickly! A few paces in the enormous stretches of space, a few breaths more in infinite time—poor Sylvine and poor François!"

Such were his thoughts during the starry watches of the night, as the terrible cough came to cut across his reflections like a scythe, and as Sylvine, with a feeble cry, turned on the light to cough up blood into a basin placed beside her. Weary with fatigue and care, he would rise and go to her, seeking words of solace. She was still trying to believe, forcing herself to cling to illusion, but in the depths of her instinct she was conscious of a voice, growing daily louder, which remorselessly insisted on reality. Her universe was fading fast away, and nothingness was enveloping her as with a garment.

IV

On one afternoon which finally came upon them, Sylvine's eyes grew shadowy, and the fever rolled high its burning waves. A furnace seemed to be consuming her exhausted flesh. Suddenly, terror passed over her, wild beasts seemed to be roaring in the night of her existence, and her hopes were being swept away by black, savage tempests. "Oh, do not let me die," she wailed, in supplication.

Her hand, as small as a child's and pitifully wasted, sought her husband's hand. He took hers into his, seized with such pity that his heart broke within him and all his wild fancies disappeared. "It is only an attack, dear little one!"

"Only an attack," she repeated, her hand clinging convulsively to François as a drowning person clings to flotsam.

And he, who had no longer any doubt, but was awaiting Sylvine's death as one awaits night or morning, said to himself, "Ah, what a mystery! She is a mystery—she is a whole universe in herself—unnumbered ages have created every fiber of her being—space is within her eyes—she is that unimaginable thing, a life, a life which suffers, a life which knows—and all this will vanish in a breath. And I—I who love her—I am forced to feel that it will be better if it can come now——"

He lifted the tiny hand, which was too hot and too moist,

and placed it against his lips. He whispered chance words of consolation. For a time, she remained without faith or hope. An implacable ringer was tolling her funeral knell. The supreme certainty was mounting, mounting from formless depths.

Suddenly, all this became changed. Extraordinary sweetness ascended from the very same abysses which had sent forth their terrors. She murmured, "I am better—how much better I am, dear loved one—how calm and restful everything is—it is really true, isn't it? We shall have a long journey, shan't we?"

"We shall surely have it, dearest!"

The hand is cooler, the breathing lighter.

"It will be divine," she whispers once more. "You were right, you were right——"

The twilight is stealing darkly over the window, the light is veiling to an ashen gray. His wife closes her eyes, her voice, lost in murmurs, sounding indistinctly. A tremor passes over her, her hand clenches, then all is peaceful. Sylvine is now motionless.

"She is sleeping," says François to himself, holding the cool little hand in his.

The ash was falling in the grate, where the red gleams were fading. The young man was strangely moved. Sylvine's immobility began to seem extraordinary. Her hand was becoming cold. Uneasy, he felt of her arm, he felt her face—and suddenly, he knew. The end was come. Time, space, joy and pain were no more.

With icy fear at his heart, he murmured, "Sylvine! Poor little Sylvine! Thank God, I never harmed you—I never made you suffer!" And he remained where he was, as in an immense astonishment, in which the remorse which we feel, even in the presence of the dead whom we have not offended, was mingled with the joy of knowing that he had always concealed everything which, either in his heart or in his conduct, might have given sorrow to Sylvine or brought despair upon her.

THE DOUTOURLINES

By COLETTE YVER

(From *Candide*)

IT was the Metropolitan of the Russian Church in the rue Daru who aided Madame Causse, the widow of a Colonel, killed at Sailly, to sublet half of her apartment to some Russian refugees. They made little difference in her régime. No one saw them. No one heard them. The clicking of sabers in her salon every Tuesday went on just the same. She entertained the whole army in the hopes of marrying off her daughter Estelle. On Sundays she invited La Generale de Viezerac and her son to dinner. As a last resort, she tried dancing parties, spiriting away the furniture from the dining room and the salon. For these affairs, Estelle wore ravishing tunics, supple things embroidered with pearls worth a fabulous amount. She was far from looking her thirty years and, when she danced, her hips, slim as an Egyptian's, seemed to offer no visible support to the stuff of her clinging dress. She put more effort than feeling into her dancing and even her feet seemed attentive and thoughtful as they traced arabesques on the parquet of the floor, joining themselves skillfully with those of her partner. Madame Causse, who was *intrigante*, tried to hide her anxiety from the row of matrons along the wall with whom she always sat. She never took her eyes off Estelle's boyish figure. Her whole face was so pretty—her intelligent eyes, her little chin. Surely they ought to be able to get her a husband.

But what about the Russians?

Every morning, little Estelle started out bravely, looking like a student with her brief-case tucked under her arm. But she had not been a student since her high-school days. She taught *sous le manteau*. "Just a few lessons to please her young friends," Madame Causse explained to her inti-

mate acquaintances. No one suspected this makeshift and when they were out in the world no one dreamed that they were not impeccably *du monde*. Their bearing, their clothes, their manner of wearing them, all proclaimed it. How they could maintain the pace was a puzzle to all who knew that they were reduced to the Colonel's meager pension, scarcely enough to pay the rent of their apartment.

At last, we are coming to the Russians.

Surely you haven't forgotten what happened before Vladivostok when Admiral Doutourline blew up his own ironclad and brought two Japanese cruisers to bay? "Much noise for nothing," as the English say. The Admiral managed to escape, however, and in his much washed blue cap and coat, the uniform of the Nanterre Hospital, he could be seen every Wednesday and Saturday morning, making his way along the Avenue de Neuilly towards the rue de Courcelles where he took breakfast with his two children, Oskol and Ivanowna. As he walked, he leaned a little on his cane, but his beard was as stiff and impressive as ever.

When he reached the rue Daru, he always cast a pious glance at the highly gilded bulbs of the Orthodox Russian Church; one more turn and he had arrived at his destination. The inhospitable elevator in its wrought-iron cage was inhospitable even to the former hero of the Russian navy, so he used to stamp up the service stairway, the noise of his cane and his heavy boots resounding all the way up to the fifth floor.

Here he stayed until noon with his son who wore the oilskin uniform of a taxi driver and with his daughter who was waitress at teatime in the "Little White Donkey." Their half of the apartment which they had rented from the Causses consisted of the kitchen, two large bedrooms and a bathroom. You might want to know where Madame and Mademoiselle Causse slept. That's easy. At night, thanks to magic divans which changed into beds, the salon became a bedroom, and by putting a stove in the clothes closet, they had a kitchen. The comfort which this arrangement procured was perhaps indirect. You can't imagine how practical it was with a little effort and by getting up early. By

nine o'clock everything was in order, the two women were dressed and an air of luxury pervaded the apartment.

The Doutourlines were eating together at a little table in the kitchen. The Admiral was seated at the head, the coat of his hospital uniform unbuttoned to give room to his sturdy chest—a heritage of his rigorous early life. Madame Ougonieff wore white leather gloves which were wrinkled by rings on each finger. She wore the gloves so that she would not soil her waxen hands when she was dishing up the ready-cooked food from the casserole. They had cold chicken and lobsters in mayonnaise. As the taciturn Oskol, armed with a fruit knife, bent over his plate like the streamline of an *aéroplane*, you could easily see the grease from his taxi beneath his finger-nails.

"Oskol," his sister said to him in French, "you haven't changed your linen yet."

All her teeth showed when she laughed, as she herself took great pleasure in laughing. It amused her to enumerate one after the other the misfortunes of the family. Her husband, Serge Ougonieff, who had been Captain of the Tsarina's Guards, had been massacred by the Chinese in 1918. He had had enormous estates in the South. He had delighted in dressing Ivanowna as if she were a doll. She wore gowns encrusted with rhinestones which she admitted had made her look like a nymph. Today her greasy dressing gown would have been scorned by the charwoman who cooked the lentils and rice in the bathroom next door for the Causses' frugal lunch—these women had so little appetite that they ate scarcely enough to keep them alive. They asked only for a bone. When Ivanowna sat down to the table and took off her gloves her hands shone with surprising brilliancy. It was Oskol who had redeemed her rings from the pawnshop with his eighty or a hundred francs a day as chauffeur. Satisfied with having deposited a quarter of a chicken on the paternal plate, she sat chattering and dissecting a bone.

"As it should be, God has put imagination into the hearts of men. The violoncellist at the 'Little White Donkey' is in love with me. He misses a measure every time I go past the orchestra with my tray balanced on my fingers. I

gave him a cherry tart the other day and now he is happy. He thinks I am his cousin and that I will give him everything he wants."

"You are disgusting," said a heavy voice from the depths of the chauffeur's uniform and his crispish hair bent over the food, "you won't have anything to do with this poor little musician and yet you torture him with your coqueties."

"But there isn't any happiness, anyway, Oskol. Nothing exists, nothing but imagination. With that cake I gave him all that is best in life. He will never again be as happy as he was at that moment."

Just then from beyond the closed doors came a vaporous melody, filtered of all its materialism as if it had been passing through successive cloisters. A prelude at first, forcing every nerve to attention and filling them with longing for what was to follow. And then, suddenly, the voice of Estelle. This time the uniform (containing Oskol) went down completely onto the table. Madame Ougonieff's earrings clicked as she turned her head and brought into relief her brown face with its tan rouge. The old Admiral, his beard still colored with drops of jelly, beat time to the rhythm of the barcarole with an accommodating potato masher. The music palpitated with all the voluptuousness of the Russian style—it was Rimsky-Korsakow's romantic "Nuit de Mai"—and rose in zigzags like those of a bird to the greatest heights which a piano can attain. And Estelle's voice was the capricious lark which was carrying the cadence of the cradle song up to heaven.

The Doutourlines were all attention. As Estelle reached the highest note Oskol raised his head and the pressure of his fists had left gray marks on the healthy red of his face. He looked like an actor, a great artist, who was very well made up as a man of the people. He saw Chaliapine again in the soirées of Saint Petersburg. Everything was brilliantly illuminated and festive. The Empress was in her box. He rose to open the door for the second stanza. Oskol limped a little. He had received a shot in the thigh-bone in 1918 when he had stood alone against the attacks of striking workmen in a munition factory where

he was engineer. The next day they thought it was his dead body that they pulled out from under a machine. The rest is too long to tell. . . . It was too bad that he had to be lame. By this time all the family were out in the hall, the Admiral hastily buttoning up his hospital coat, on the front of which his decorations were arranged like bright-colored silks and needlework in a shop window. Scarcely realizing what she was doing, Madame Ougonieff, still in her refugee dressing gown, knocked on the door of the salon.

Estelle left the piano. Madame Causse looked at the jelly spots on the old man's huge beard which he supported with his hand. She was affectedly condescending as she said:

"Good morning, Admiral. How are you, Admiral?"

Estelle and Ivanowna were already friends. To the Parisian this Princess of Asia in her sordid robes seemed to have stepped out of a fairy-tale. The massacre of Serge Ougonieff and the mysterious death of Igor, her second fiancé, who had been killed while he was making preparations for Ivanowna's escape, had added a halo to her head. Then her unconquerable laugh had rung out above all these shocks, above all these memories. Estelle took hold of her waxen hands, drew her into the room and made her sit down. Ivanowna apologized for her dressing gown which was soiling the rose damask of the Louis XV armchair.

"We Russians," she said gaily, "we have suffered so much! Everything looks the same to us. We are wild-cats who have been domesticated in salons for a few centuries. We have given up our paws and have turned ourselves into dandies. We have been sitting around in a circle on the carpet, rusting away. But hunger has brought the barbaric life back to us and civilized things haven't the same value in our eyes that they have in yours. We live now only to eat."

Estelle answered her from the other end of the room.

"Listen. People don't go back to the forest that way. When there is refinement in their blood they fight. They cling to the human city."

"You French people are different. You are elastic instruments that nothing can break. You may be bent by misfortune for a moment, but you always return to your original shape."

As usual Oskol remained silent, but as he turned the pages of the music his brown nostrils dilated. Farther down the salon old Doutourline, his stomach satisfied, had become talkative and was saying to Madame Causse:

"*Mais non*, Madame, *mais non*, the hospital is very pleasant, very pleasant. The food? Of course when I came to Paris in 1889, with our lamented Sovereign's escort, eating was a little better than at Nanterre. But everything French is delicious. There's a most amiable man in the next bed to mine who pretends that he is from Menilmontant, but I'm sure this must be in France. A taste for alcohol has brought him to this place where we both are—for such different reasons. After every one is asleep he whispers to me, 'Hey there, Grand-pere, want a cigar?' As he has a skin disease all over his fingers, he hands the cigar to me in a paper cone. Most delicate of him! I have him to thank for being once more at ease, with my favorite cigar every day. He refuses to tell where he gets them. His son works at the gambling club on the rue Royal."

Ensnconced in the best easy-chair of the salon, the Admiral abandoned himself to a hearty laugh. It might have been the laugh of a Rajah and it stopped the words of commiseration which Madame Causse had on her lips.

"Oskol is happy to have found music again," Madame Ougonieff confided to Estelle. "He has such a passion for Rimsky and Borodine. His voice is enchanting! Why, one time when we were staying with her, the Grand Duchess Alexis told him that he sang like a god."

"Is that so, Monsieur Oskol?" asked Estelle.

Oskol only laughed silently, uncovering his wolf teeth. They gleamed almost as brightly as those of a negro, and contrasted vividly with his face, tanned and burned by sun, rain, wind and moonlight during the two years that he had driven his taxi from seven o'clock in the morning until after the theater, going back and forth along

the routes richest in tips—from Montmartre to Vaugirard, from the Muette to the Gare de Lyon.

That night everything was changed in this salon. A tiny oil lamp with an alabaster globe flamed faintly. It animated the shadows, enlivened the masses of gold arm-chairs, and then introduced strange personages who flew softly about. Estelle lay feigning sleep, her abundance of soft downy hair matted against the pillow like a pony's mane. Madame Causse's thin face, sharpened by maturity, gleamed white from the other bed. She never took her eyes off her daughter's bed, watching the phantom hosts which haunted it. Estelle was not asleep. She was sure of that. Her head rolled too much from one ear to the other, her slender body tried too often to find a comfortable spot on the camp mattress. And as distinctly as if he had been there in flesh and blood, Madame Causse saw the fleeting astral form of young Viezerac. She could see his tight coat, the shoulder that was just a bit out of line, his small head, and his hair, so highly waxed that it reflected the light.

"How far had he and Estelle gone?" she asked herself as if in a nightmare—a mother become a Sphinx. Had he acted like a suitor? Estelle never mentioned his name. What signs of love were there in this moody daughter of hers? The reason for all this was that, this very afternoon, La Generale de Viezerac had told them that her son was engaged; and Estelle was not sleeping this evening. How silent a storm in a soul can be! Estelle's little head rolled so sweetly upon her pillow, scarcely making a sound that the ear could catch! And Madame Causse never budged, although her most promising chance to marry off Estelle had been removed. Then, with no more commotion than a big bat would make, there passed into the salon other phantoms still more shadowy—sub-lieutenants that she had counted upon, a young lawyer, even a cabinet attaché. Estelle was so pretty! You ought to think. . . . And Madame Causse thought about Estelle's future. She would be old before long. Even now she seemed lost in the desert isle of her celibacy, devoting herself to that sad ingenuity of Robinson's by means of which poor women left alone in the world man-

aged to pilfer the barest necessities by adhering strictly to a régime of the absolute minimum. Madame Causse tried establishing a budget for Estelle, but when she herself disappeared from the stage the Colonel's pension disappeared too. Then other visions came to her tired brain: the *couturière* who made Estelle's modish tunics, Madame Bonté, stylishly dressed and holding a paper in her hand—her *petit mémoire*; and the upholsterer in his smock his yellow meter-stick in his pocket, his very eyes like creditors who were doing their best to make him fail; and the coal company's delivery-man, an individual devoid of delicacy who was constantly humiliating women of the world by depriving them of heat just because they couldn't pay for the tons of coal that they burned.

When she went in next door to collect the monthly rent Madame Causse was invariably astonished to see Ivanowna plunge her fingers up to the rings in an ocean of crumpled blue banknotes in an old hatbox. Every night when he came home from work Oskol dumped the contents of his pocket-book here. Madame Ougonieff tried to find the hundred-franc notes which were swimming about amid the waves of tens and twenties. Quite often she dragged out four or five with the first throw of her hook.

"These people are far from dying of hunger," Madame Causse said to herself, "but they have fallen to the very bottom of the social ladder."

This was why she never received them at her table, in spite of the insignificant fact that their money paid the rent and kept the establishment running. When Estelle asked her to invite these poor Doutourlines, she never failed to answer:

"Oh no, *Cherie*, in spite of the fact that I pity them so."

And now, this evening, for no reason at all that Estelle could see, her mother had changed her mind and was going to ask them to Sunday dinner.

"But Madame de Viezerac will be here on Sunday," Estelle cried, astonished.

"That will flatter the poor things."

"Will the Admiral come too?"

"Certainly. He has a great deal of *savoir faire*, and his

manners are most noble. You really forget that they are *declass  * when he says '*Mille graces*' instead of *Merci* and '*Daignez Madame*' for *voulez-vous*, and all those other charming old French formulas that went into Russia a hundred years ago with Joseph de Maistre. And then I hope he will wear his uniform."

He did not wear his uniform. In his hospital clothes, he marched past the circle of golden armchairs in the salon, and was duly presented to La Generale, who had just succeeded in marrying off her son. In spite of the fact that his chest was swollen by asthma it was scarcely broad enough to accommodate the green, amethyst, white, and Prussian blue enamel crosses arranged in several rows: the *Legion d'honneur* and the *Ordre de Saint-Andre*, the *Aigle Blanc* and *Saint-Wladimir*, *Saint-Anne* and the *Ordre de Stanislas* and of *Saint George*. Dragging along behind him the savage Oskol and Ivanowna in her little black waitress's dress, he kissed the hands of the three women, comparing each of them to a different flower as they used to do in the romances of 1820.

When he introduced his son he referred to him as "Cosaque du Don" and gave Estelle the name of "Etoile du Matin." As she sat down at the table near her, Madame Ougonieff complimented her by saying that only the French could have such intelligent eyes. Even after she had stopped talking she studied Estelle's perfection—her clear-cut pink chin, the slenderness of her smiling lips and her epicurean nose—taking in her *points* as though she were an expensive dog which she wanted to buy. La Generale, who had once been head of a hospital, treated Oskol and his father as though they had been prize cases. She spoke of "your distress," "your terrible suffering," as she had once mouthed "your fracture," "your wound," or "your gangrene." They all assumed toward these victims of fate the attitude of benevolence which one would employ when visiting the poor. They made them into doleful friends, plaintive and humble. Unfortunately this was impossible. The Doutourlines still considered themselves a part of the Russia of the Tsars, that Oriental plutocracy of nobles, satraps, and slaves.

Even the silent Oskol burst out laughing like a prince when Madame Causse condescendingly hinted that his work as chauffeur must be very fatiguing.

"Oskol!" echoed Ivanowna. "You should have seen him in Russia! I remember one night when they were eating supper until two in the morning at the Grand Duchess's in Ukraine, and at three they were still at the table. Oskol, who used to sing well only when he had plenty of champagne, was furnishing all the music. You should have seen him jump into his car at daybreak to get back to his post in the factory in time for work. He had five hundred *versts* to drive—just about as far as from here to Lyons, I should think."

And then the Admiral:

"Oskol was what you call a *lascar* here in France. I was entertaining Admiral Gervais at Saint Petersburg the day that he was born. That was in '91. During the dessert they came to tell me that I had a son. Admiral Gervais said to me in his inimitable dry humor that the meal would not be perfect until they had brought the young son in on a platter. To flatter my French guest the nurse carried the youngster down on a pillow. Even then he had a violent complexion and a ferocious voice. The Admiral expressed the wish that he would never have anything to do with women and that he would have strength of mind and body. As for the first wish, I don't know how that has come out, but I swear to you that the animal, when he doesn't have a broken paw, believes that there is nothing but good in the world."

A fit of coughing seized the old man and he leaned back in his chair, tired of talking and laughing. There was nothing which he would not turn into gaiety. It seemed that in this parsimonious Parisian bourgeois repast where everything was pared down to the minimum in an effort to make it seem "*de luxe*," the fantastic personality of the old Admiral found itself once more in the environment of flowing champagne in golden goblets and of innocent orgies. All he had drunk between the roast beef and the salad was some Algerian wine bought at a sale in the nearest shop.

The result was that the Causses were once more im-

pressed with the weight of grandeur attached to these aristocrats. What a figure the old Admiral must have cut ten years ago! Madame de Viezerac expanded under the spell, citing relatives, names of ministers, military attachés, hoping to make herself as great as these Doutourlines. Estelle could not help smiling as she looked at Madame Ougonieff.

"What a wonderful life you must have had!"

"*Ma chère*," the young woman answered, "not so much as you might think. I was bored to death on the days when there weren't any balls. I cut into bits I don't know how many collections of *Novoié Vremia* during an idle afternoon."

"Why?" asked Estelle.

"To give my hands something to do."

After all, Madame Causse was only the daughter of a small-town book dealer. At home they had always cut a *sou* into quarters and the grandeur in which they lived was only imaginary. But Captain Causse had been able to get a good salary through the right connection. This salary was only a modest sum, but this was much easier to measure than unexpected and unreliable gold lace. How many French people have a second religion wrapped up in the words, "*Tenir son rang!*" Without realizing it, the Causses were most devoted worshipers at this social shrine. But when they were thrown up against true aristocrats, real *Grands*, they lost footing.

The Doutourlines succeeded in intimidating Madame Causse. Their authenticity did it. It excited her like the touch of antique furniture. Oskol was the only one with whom she was at ease, for the simple reason that he said nothing and she attributed this to lack of strength. Taking advantage of the fact that he was alone in the kitchen one day she asked him for an advance on next month's rent. Armed with her *petit mémoire*, Madame Bonté, the modiste, was becoming menacing. To save her face she told Oskol a tale of poor relatives who needed money at once.

"Anything that you ask," said Oskol impetuously.

This time he did not laugh. He talked. And he was even more the gentleman than his father. He talked so

much that Madame Causse could not get in a word, not even *merci*. He said that although the Doutourlines had not actually been killed in the Russian revolution, they were barely living. The scope of their life had been reduced, he explained. This compression of existence had given them a new sense of the value of money. The change was really overwhelmingly favorable. By reducing their needs to a minimum they had disturbed the equilibrium between the supply and demand for money. The supply now exceeded the demand. Anything which in any way could increase the debit side of their existence helped to reestablish balance by creating a need of money. Spending for them was one way of living again.

Although Madame Causse understood only about two-thirds of this abstract explanation, she was very strongly moved. The brown Cossack with curly hair and far-away eyes held the hatbox out to her with both hands and as though he were her slave he begged her to take from it. She thought this was ridiculous and refused to help herself.

That afternoon, however, she received an envelope.

Their intimacy increased. At the slightest excuse Estelle and Ivanowna ran back and forth between the two apartments. At ten in the morning or at noon Estelle knew that she would find her friend sitting in her peignoir on the nuptial bed of Colonel and Madame Causse, smoking Russian cigarettes made at Antwerp. It was only at this stage in the game that Estelle confessed that she was giving lessons.

"That's fine," said Ivanowna. "If I were in your place . . ."

"Shh," said Estelle, "if any one should hear about it, all our efforts to hold our position would be useless."

Oskol arranged to come back to the rue de Courcelles for dinner instead of taking his chance with masons at noon in the rush for the *plat du jour* as he had done at first. The Causses bought champagne to make him sing, this being the one thing that would put him in voice. After his heavy chin had endangered the delicate rim of three glasses, he surrendered to Estelle and followed her to the piano. He sang in Russian with savage intonation and an

infernal rhythm to which his body swayed like that of a dancer. His tenor notes had the sweetness of a violin.

"Oh, that makes me remember . . . makes me remember . . ." Madame Ougonieff said, keeping her eyes riveted on the carpet.

Although she had been weeping, she started to laugh when she raised her head.

"Don't you think Oskol ought to go on the stage?"

Sometimes he brought Estelle flowers. The timidity which came from his social fall made him accessible to her and she became familiar with him, scolding him like a little boy about his extravagant presents, his dirty hands, the wrinkles in his chauffeur's uniform, and his silence. With him she had the banal and inconsequential coqueties which a woman uses with a man from whom she has nothing to hope. One day he seemed to resist her when she tried to persuade him to teach her a new dance. She grasped his shoulders with all the strength in her little hands, and he gave in to her, his hobnailed boots wedged to her pointed slippers as they traced the intricate design of a fox-trot on the carpet. His very teeth gleamed with delight. Ivanowna was at the piano and she kept jumping up every ten minutes to see if the red body and muddy hood of the taxi could still be seen at the edge of the sidewalk.

Once she said flatly when they happened to meet in the hall, "My poor Oskol."

Estelle answered the gaze of the goat-like eyes and said, "Men are never to be pitied."

One Sunday the Causses were very much surprised when Madame Ougonieff and her father, dressed for a special occasion, came into their salon. Perhaps the most conspicuous thing in their whole get-up was the white of the Admiral's leather gloves, contrasted as it was with the blue of his hospital clothes. Not content with the sublime anachronism of shining decorations and medals losing themselves on this livery of misery, the chased gold sheath of the Admiral's sword was being forced into a misalliance with his faded and badly patched trousers by the stubbornness of a gorgeous belt.

"Madame, I have the honor . . ."

"Do pardon Papa if he is a bit burlesque," interrupted Ivanowna, "he is wearing these decorations to mark the solemnity of the occasion."

Gravely the two Caussees greeted him. The Admiral answered,

"Madame, have the kindness to bestow upon my son, Oskol Doutourline, the hand of your daughter."

Estelle was less stupefied than her mother although she had never officially adopted the idea that the chauffeur was in love with her. But Madame considered the proposal as extremely funny. She felt suddenly overcome with mirth at the thought of this union of worn oil-skin with the fawn of Estelle's tunic. She scarcely hesitated thirty seconds before answering:

"We are greatly honored, etc. . . . but although I do not wish to influence my daughter's decision, I might just as well say to you now, Monsieur, that the marriage seems to me impossible."

This was the beginning of a battle between the two civilizations represented by these four people, so fraternal on the surface, so at variance with one another in their depths. When Father Doutourline spoke again, it was even funnier.

"Oskol is a noble son." He told of his childhood in lace, ruling over an army of servants at five, his early education by a French tutor at twelve, his trip to Germany to learn industry at eighteen like a second Peter the Great. Oskol was an adolescent Apollo released from Vulcan equipped with an auto speeding whole nights across forests overrun with wolves, fighting alone one day against forty workmen drunk with a ferocious Utopia, and finally, falling down in mute admiration before Mademoiselle Causse.

"He's completely foolish over her," put in Ivanowna to bring up his stock.

As they sat pale and straight in their armchairs, straining every nerve so as not to miss a single step in this social progress, Estelle and her mother shuddered but said not a word. These two mediocre bourgeoisies had sustained a very serious blow under the heavy and savage valor of

the Asiatic aristocrats' attack. But there was one immediate reality behind which their French minds could entrench themselves. Estelle could not marry a taxi driver. They must not get away from it. On this ground of concrete truth they could fight.

"What have you against Oskol?" demanded Madame Ougonieff.

Together they answered, "Nothing."

"Estelle wouldn't be alone any more," continued Madame Ougonieff, "and you wouldn't be anxious about her any longer. Oskol is so good."

Fearing that Estelle might yield, Madame Causse spoke impressively:

"Ah, yes, I know. But don't you see that we French cannot accept changes in social standing as you do. We cannot submit to social inferiority as though it were but an illness. You are content to place the tangible need of the individual before those of a more mundane character. When you adopt a lower social place you take over every part of it, even its pleasures. You seem to take a hopeless pride in cutting social ties, in abandoning yourselves to a tragic liberty which is easy and somewhat trivial; while we know how to live only by fixing certain boundaries within which we must stay, and we gather about us a mantle which we cannot let fall without eternal shame. There are no bare necessities for the French. Artificial necessities alone are of the first order, and it is for these that the eyes of the world search. We are poor, Admiral, terribly poor, but in the ten years that I have been a widow we have always presented the same front and kept the same place in the world. This has meant untiring work, a ransom of unbelievable sacrifices. But we have remained women of social standing. Do you imagine that today or any day, even at the price of a great sentiment, I would let Estelle fall into. . . . No, Admiral, I cannot do it. My child would suffer too much—the tips, the bidding for fare, the remarks of our relatives. I know you'll think this narrow, stingy, little. It may seem so in detail, but the *ensemble* is French Society. We are very social beings."

Crushed by this, the old Admiral arranged his fan-like beard so that it would hide the faces of his medals. As a last resort Ivanowna cried:

"But what about you, Estelle? Say something! Say something!"

Estelle was trembling all over and her explanation had a young girl's characteristic blindness and lack of reasoning.

"I really like Monsieur Oskol very much, but I never thought of marrying him. I fall too short of having the courage of your fatalism before misfortune. You act as though it were a new Tsarist régime to whose decrees you must submit yourselves. You outstrip your destiny. You have gone so far that it no longer exists. I can't understand how any one can resign himself to a fate which might have been avoided. If you were shipwrecked you would let yourselves run with the tide. Thank goodness I would swim."

"Come, Father," said Madame Ougenieff, getting up, "these women are right. Our proposal was absurd."

"But," persisted the chimerical old man of Vladivostok, shaking a bony finger in the air, "when the Empire rises again out of its ruins, Oskol will again be . . ."

"No, Father. Come."

Besides it was time for her to serve tea at the "Little White Donkey."

At night the Causses could hear everything that went on in the Doutourlines' rooms through the walls. Tonight it was Estelle's head which was the first to become motionless on her pillow in this haunted salon, while before her mother's eyes passed a mystic procession of worldly relatives which completely unstrung her—there were those who questioned and those who were satisfied with what she had done. For a moment the phantoms disappeared and Madame Causse could hear Ivanowna's footsteps and the rattling of dishes in the kitchen. Then all was quiet. At one o'clock in the morning Oskol came home. There was a colloquy in Ivanowna's room, the slippery labials of the voluble Russian language penetrating as far as the salon.

Then came a great silence—the silence of the tomb—so great that it kept Madame Causse from sleeping. It

must have been three o'clock when the thought came to her:

"I'll go back to the Russian Church in the rue Daru to get some other tenants."

**THE YEARBOOK OF THE FRENCH
SHORT STORY
JULY, 1924, TO JULY, 1925**

ADDRESSES OF MAGAZINES PUBLISHING SHORT STORIES

NOTE. This address list does not aim to be complete, but it is based simply on the magazines which I have consulted for this volume, and which have not ceased publication.

- AF. L. Afrique Latine, Paris.
- AN. Les Annales, rue Saint Georges, Paris.
- B. L. Belles Lettres, 89, Boulevard Exelmans, Paris.
- C. Candide, 18, rue du Saint-Gothard, Paris.
- CON. Contemporains, 7, rue du Vieux Colombier, Paris.
- C. I. Conteurs Inédits, Editions Kemplen, rue de Miromesnil, Paris.
- CR. Le Correspondant, 31, rue Saint Guillaume, Paris.
- E. Europe, 7, Place Saint Sulpice, Paris.
- F. Figaro, Rond Point des Champs Elysées, Paris.
- G. R. La Grande Revue, 37, rue de Constantinople, Paris.
- IL. L'Illustration, 13, rue Saint Georges, Paris.
- L. L. Les Lettres, 14, rue de l'Abbaye, Paris.
- L. P. T. Lecture Pour Tous, 79, Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris.
- M. Les Marges, 110, Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris.
- M. F. Mercure de France, 26, rue de Condé, Paris.
- N. L. Nouvelles Littéraires, 6, rue de Milan, Paris.
- NR. La Nouvelle Revue, 80, rue Taithout, Paris.
- N. R. C. Nouvelle Revue Critique, 16, rue José-Maria-de-Hérédia, Paris.
- N. R. F. Nouvelle Revue Française, 3, rue de Grenelle, Paris.
- R. B. Revue Bleue, 286, Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris.
- R. CR. Revue Critique, 27, rue Saint Sulpice, Paris.
- R. 2M. Revue des Deux Mondes, 15, rue de l'Université, Paris.
- RE. La Revue Européenne, 6, rue Blanche, Paris.
- R. F. Revue de France, 1, Avenue de l'Observatoire, Paris.
- R. H. Revue Hebdomadaire, 8, rue Garancière.
- R. M. Revue Mondiale, 45, rue Jacob, Paris.
- R. P. Revue de Paris, 3, rue Auber, Paris.
- RU. La Revue Universelle, 157, Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris.

THE BIOGRAPHICAL ROLL OF HONOR OF FRENCH SHORT STORIES

JULY, 1924, TO JULY, 1925

NOTE. *Only stories by French authors are listed.*

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ARNOUX, ALEXANDRE. Author: Au Grand Vent; Abisag, ou l'Eglise transportée par la foi; Le Cabaret; La Nuit de St. Barnabé; Sextuor; Le Fauteuil; Supplement au Voyage de Marco Polo.

BAILLY, AUGUSTE. Author: Le Champ des Carottes; Les Divins Jongleurs; Les Prédestinés et les Chaînes du Passé; La Troupe sans rivale; Les chînes du Passé; La légende du blé; Le Chevalier Blanc; Le gros Lot; Le Ménétrier de Less'lach; L'Amour tue et sauve; La Carcasse; Le Pédicure Chinois; Trois Nuptiales; Eros, Invincible Eros.

BARRIERE, MARCEL. Born at Limoux, November 3, 1860. Author: L'Œuvre d'Honoré de Balzac; Le Nouveau Don Juan; L'Education d'un Contemporain; Le Roman de l'Ambition; Les Ruines de l'Amour; La Dernière Epopée; Le Monde Noir; L'Art des passions; La Nouvelle Europe; Saint Ange d'A——, histoire d'amour éllégiaque; Les Précurseurs; Un Homme de demain; Vers la guerre; L'Ere sanglante; La Fédération Latine; La Quatrième République; Le Monde Futur; Le Mauvais Eros.

BAZIN, RENE, de l'Académie Française. Born at Angers, December 26, 1853. Legion of Honor. Author: Une tache d'encre; Les Noellet; A l'aventure; Ma Tante Giron; La Sarcelle Bleue; Sicilie; Madame Corentine; Les Italiens d'aujourd'hui; Humble amour; Terre d'Espagne; En Province; De toute son âme; Contes de Bonne Perrette; La Terre qui meurt; Croquis de France et d'Orient; Les Oberlé; Le Guide de l'Empereur; Donatienne; Pages Choisis; Récits de la Plaine et de la Montagne; L'Isolée; Stéphanette; L'Enseigne de vaisseau Paul Henry; Le Duc de Nemours; Le Blé qui lève; Notes d'une amateur de couleurs; La Campagne Birot; Nord-Sud; Mémoires d'une vieille fille; Gingolph l'abandonné; La Closserie de Champdolent; Récits du temps de la Guerre; Les Nouveaux Oberlé; Il était quatre enfants; Conte de Triolet.

BEAUNIER, ANDRE. Born at Evreux, September 22, 1869. Author: Les Dupont-Le-Terrier; Notes sur la Russie; Bonhommes de Paris; La Poésie Nouvelle; Les Trois Legrand; Picrate et Siméon; Le

Roi Tobol; L'Art de regarder les Tableaux; Les Idees et les Hommes; Trois amies de Châtaubriant; L'Homme qui a perdu son moi; La Fille de Polichinelle; Le Sourire d'Athéna; Les Souvenirs d'un Peintre; Figures d'autrefois; Sentiments de la guerre; La Jeunesse de Joseph Joubert; Les plus détestables bonhommes; Visages de femmes; Les Surboches; Le Dernier Jour; L'Assassinée; Irène Exigeante.

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BERNARD, TRISTAN. Born at Besançon, September 7, 1866. Author: Contes de Pantruche et d'ailleurs; Sous toutes réserves; Mémoire d'un Jeune Homme rangé; Un mari pacifique; Amants et voleurs; Le Crime d'Orléans; L'Affaire Larcier; Deux amateurs de femmes; M. Codomat; Le Costaud des Epinettes; Les Deux Canards; Citoyens, Animaux, Phénomènes; Les Veillées du Chauffeur; Auteurs, Acteurs, Spectateurs; Le Roman d'un mois d'Eté; Sur les grands chemins; Nicolas Bergère; Mathilde et ses mitaines (avec Schlumberger); On naît esclave; Les Visiteurs Nocturnes; Les Juneaux de Brighton; Le Petit Café; L'Accord Parfait; Jeanne Doré; Du vin dans son eau ou l'impôt sur le revenu; La Carte d'Amour; Souvenirs épars d'un ancien cavalier; L'Enfant Prodigue du Vésinet; Corinne et Corentin; Le sceau du secret; La Vache.

BINET-VALMER, GUSTAVE. Born at Geneva, Switzerland, June 5, 1875. Author: Les Métèques; Le Gamin tendre; Lucien; Le Sphinx de Plâtre; Le Plaisir; Notre pauvre amour; Le Cœur en désordre; La Passion; L'Enfant qui meurt; Le Désir et le Péché; Le Désordre; Les Jours sans Gloire; La Seconde Epouse; Cette Haine; Le Bois qui parle; Dieu et les Hommes, Une Morte.

BONDY, FRANÇOIS DE. Born in Paris. Author: Le Moqueur; Constance dans les Cieux; A l'Enfant Brune; Pygmalion aux cent amours; Framboise Hepin et Les Environs.

BONNARD, ABEL. Author: Les Familiers; Les Royautés; La Vie et l'Amour; L'Adieu; La France et ses Morts; Les Morts.

BORDEAUX, HENRI, de l'Académie Française. Born at Thonon-les-Bains, January 29, 1870. Author: Ames modernes; Sentiments et idées de ce temps; Le Pays natal; Le Voie sans retour; La Peur de Vivre; L'Amour en fuite; Une Honnête femme; Le Pain Blanc; Le Lac noir; Vies Intimes; La Petite Mademoiselle; Les Roquevillard; Paysages romanesques; L'Ecran Brisé; La Robe de Laine; Le fort de Vaux; Le Carnet d'un Stagiaire; La Neige sur les pas; La Maison; Amette et Philibert; La Nouvelle Croisade des enfants; La Jeunesse Nouvelle; Les Derniers Jours du Fort de Vaux; La Chanson de Vaux-Douaumont; Les Pierres du Foyer; La Résurrection de la Chair; Marie Louise ou les deux sœurs;

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BOURCET, PAUL, de l'Académie Française. Born at Amiens, September 2, 1853. Author: L'Irréparable; Deuxième Amour; Profils Perdus; André Cornélis; Recommencements; Voyageuses; Complications sentimentales; La Duchesse Bleue; Le Luxe des Autres; Le Geste du Fils; Nemesis; Conflits Intimes; Cœurs D'Enfants; Tragiques Remous.

BOUTET, FREDERIC. Author: La Lanterne Rouge; Celles qui les attendent; Lucie, Jean et Jo; Morgam passa; Totote et Cie.; Les Malheurs d'Auguste; Quart de Livre et la Fille de Mme. Tranchart; Un Beau Mariage; Les Saphirs; Le Réalisateur; Le Paradis Perdu; Gribiche; Le Harem Eparpille.

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CHERAU, GASTON. Born at Niort, November 6, 1872. Author: Les grandes époques de M. Thébault; La Saison balnéaire de M. Thébault; Monseigneur voyage; Champi-tortu; La Prison de Verre; L'Oiseau de Prois; Le Monstre; Le Remous; Valentine Pacquault; Braco; Bilan.

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COLETTE. Author: La Paix chez les Bêtes; Dans La Foule; Mitsou, ou comment l'esprit vient aux filles; Chéri; Les Heures Longues; La Maison de Claudine; L'Envers du Music-Hall; L'Entrave, suite à la Vagabonde; Le Voyage Egoïste; La Chambre Eclairée; Sept Dialogues de Bêtes; La Retraite Sentimentale; Claudine en ménage (in coopération with Willy); La Vagabonde; L'Ingénue Libertine; Claudine à l'école (in coopération with Willy); Claudine s'en va; Claudine à Paris. Les Vrilles de la Vigne.

DEKOBRA, MAURICE. Born at Paris, May 26, 1885. Author: Les Mémoires de Rat de Cave; Histoire de Brigands; Le voyage sentimental de Lord Littlebird; Les Liaisons tranquilles; Messieurs Les Tommies; Sammy, Volontaire Américain; Grain de Cachou; L'Etonnante Vie du Colonel Jack; Le Gentleman Burlesque; Prince ou Pître; Hamydal le Philosophe; Minuit Place Pigalle; Le Rire dans le brouillard; La Fillette aux oranges; Une Momie a été perdu; La Madonna des Sleepings.

DE LAURIS, GEORGES. Author: *Une Conquête*. IL. 8. 23.

DELARUE-MARDRUS, LUCIE. Born at Honfleur, November 3, 1880. Author: *La Figure De Proue*; *Comme Tout le Monde*; *La Monnaie de Singe*; *L'Inexpérimentée*; *Douce Moitié*; *Un Cancré*; *Deux Amants*; *Souffle de Tempête*; *Toutoune et son Amour*; *A Maman*; *L'Apparition*; *Le Pain Blanc*; *Lucie*; *Amélie et les Déséchés*; *La Mère et le Fils*; *Le Veau Lunaire*; *Le Beau Baiser*.

DERENNES, CHARLES. Born at Villeneuve sur Lot, August 4, 1882. Winner of Goncourt Prize. Author: *L'Enivrante Angoisse*; *L'Amour Fesse*; *La Tempête*; *La Nuit d'été*; *Les Bains dans la Pactole*; *Les Caprice de Nouché*; *Persephone*; *Le Renard Bleu*; *Le Pour et Le Contre*; *Kiki*; *Rat Blanc*; *Filon, le lézard vert*; *La Sirene*.

DOMINIQUE, PIERRE. Born at Courtenay in 1889. Author: *Fumées*; *Contes Desobligeants*; *Notre Dame de la Sagesse*; *Deux Jours chez Ludendorff*; *La Proie de Venus*; *La Morte*; *Le Besoin d'empire*; *Les Condamnes a Mort*; *La Reine de Saba*.

DRIEU, LA ROCHELLE. Author: *La Valise Vide*; *L'Aumone*; *Le Pique-Nique*.

DUHAMEL, GEORGES. Author: *Le Miracle*; *Lapointe et Ropiteau*; *Élévation et mort d'Armand Branche*; *Entretiens dans le Tumulte*; *Paul Claudel*; *Confession de Minuit*; *La Lumière*; *Les Hommes Abandonnés*; *Civilisation*; *Suite Hollandaise*; *Le Dernier*.

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DUVERNOIS, HENRI. Born in Paris, March 4, 1875. The leading naturalist short story writer. Author: *Le Veau Gras*; *Fifinoiseau*; *Le Mari de la Couturière*; *Nounette ou la Déesse aux cent bouches*; *Popote*; *La Maladresse*; *La Maison des Confidences*; *Marchandes D'Oublis*; *Le Roseau de Fer-Edgar*; *Les Demoiselles de Perdition*; *Nane ou le lit Conjugal*; *Crapotte*; *Edgar*; *La Brebis galeuse*; *Le Revenant*; *Servante*; *Toto*; *La Leçon Inutile*; *Morte la Bête*; *L'Eunuque*.

FARRERE, CLAUDE. Born at Lyons, April 27, 1876. Author: *Fumées d'opium*; *Les Civilisés*; *L'Homme qui Assassina*; *Mlle. Dax*; *Les Petites Alliées*; *La Bataille*; *Les Temporeras*; *Dix-sept Histoires de Marins*; *Quatorze Histoires de Soldats*; *La Maison des Hommes Vivants*; *Bêtes et Gens qui s'aimèrent*; *La Dernière Déesse*; *La Vieille Histoire*; *Les Condamnées à Mort*; *Roxelane*; *Croquis d'Orient*; *Damoclès*; *Cent Millions d'Or*; *Une Jeune Fille Voyagea*; *La Mort de l'Emden*.

GERALDY, PAUL. Author: *Les Petites Ames*; *Toi et Moi*; *La Guerre*; *Madame*; *Les Noces D'Argent*; *Aimer*; *Les Grands Garçons*; *Le Prélude*.

GIRAUDOUX, JEAN. Author: Juliette au Pays des Hommes; Visite chez Le Prince; La Pharmacienne; Provinciales; L'Ecole des Indifférents; Lectures pour une ombre; Simon le Pathétique; Amica America; Elpenor; Adieu à la Guerre; Adorable Clio; Suzanne et le Pacifique; Siegfried et le Limousin.

GUIET-VAUQUELIN, PIERRE. Born at Montauban, June 10, 1882. Author: L'Ame Nouvelle; Le Monopole Universitaire; La Revue Rose Toulousaine; Le Triomphe de la Chair; Mendiandou; Les Immobiliers; Le Marchand d'Illusions; Le Sang des Vignes; La Force du Doute; Le Phorminx; L'Amour en Détresse; La Torpille; L'Ame de Paris; La Culture de Citrus; L'Amour Exige; La Passion Aragonaise.

HARRY, MYRIAM. Author: Passage de Bedouins; Madame Petit Jardin; Sonia à Paris; Sonia chez les Barbares; La Petite Fille de Jerusalem; L'Impérissable Tendresse; Le Manteau Tututelaire; La Veuve de Tutankhamen.

HIRSCH, CHARLES-HENRI. Born at Paris, April 18, 1870. Author: La Vierge aux Tulipes; Eva Tumarches et ses amis; La Démoniselle de Comédie; Pantins et Ficelles; Le Tigre et Coquelicot; Les Disparates; Des hommes, des femmes et des bêtes; Dame Fortune; Le Sang de Paris; Racaille et Parias; Les Châteaux de Sable; L'Amour en herbe; Le Crime de Potru, soldat; La Grande Capricieuse; La Chèvre aux pieds d'or; Zulaïna; L'Enchaînement; Nicolas Florinette; Le Silencieux; Un aimable Voleur; Le Suborneur.

HUET, MAURICE. Author: La Cent Onzième Olympiade; A Quatre Pattes; Publicité; Amour et Alesage.

JALOUX, EDMOND. Born at Marseilles, June 19, 1878. Author: L'Agonie de l'Amour; Les Sangsues; Le Jeune Homme au Masque; L'Ecole des Mariages; Le Démon de la Vie; Le Reste est Silence; Le Boudoir de Proserpine; L'Eventail de crêpe; L'Incertaine; Fumées dans la Campagne; Au-dessus de la Ville; Les Femmes et la Vie; Les Amours Perdues; La Fin d'un beau jour; L'Escalier d'Or; La Fugitive; La Destinée; Le Roi Cophetua.

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LARGUIER, LEO. Born in La Grand-Combe, December 6, 1878. Author: La Maison du Poète; Les Isolements; Jacques; L'Après-midi chez l'antiquaire.

LAVEDAN, HENRI, de l'Académie Française. Born in Orléans, April 9, 1859. Author: Mam'zelle Vertu; Reine Janvier; Lydie; Inconsolables; Sire; Petites Fêtes; La Haute; Une Famille; Nocturnes; Le Nouveau Jeu; La Critique du Prince d'Aurec; Leur Cœur; Une Cour; Leur beau physique; Le Lit; Le Prince d'Aurec; Leurs sœurs; Les Marionnettes; Le Vieux Marcheur; La Valse; Les Départs; Les Deux Noblesses; Les Beaux Dimanches; Le Carnet d'un petit châtelain; Le Marquis de Priola; C'est servi! Viveurs; Varennes (in coopération with G. Lenôtre); Baignoire 9; Le Duel; Le Bon Temps; En Visite; Bon an, mal an; La Vie courante; Les Grandes Heures; La Famille française; La Chienne du Roi; Servir; La Valse-Pétard; Les Sacrifices (in coopération with Michael Zamacoïs); Lydie; Panteau; Belle Histoire de Geneviève.

LENORMAND, H. R. Author: Poussière; L'Esprit Souterrain; Terres Chaudes; Trois Drames; Le Penseur; Fidélité.

LICHTENBERGER, ANDRE. Author: Mon Petit Trott (Académie Française, Montyon prize); La Petite Sœur de Trott; La Petite; Biche; Le Cœur est le même; Le Sang Nouveau; Le Petit Roi; L'Automne; Notre Minnie Lines; Portraits d'aieules; Portrait de jeunes filles; La Mort de Corinthe; Scènes en Famille; Chez les Graffougnat; Les Centaures; Poupette, fille d'Allah; Gorri le Forban; Kaligouça le cœur fidèle; Raraméné, histoire d'ailleurs; Père; Rédemption; La Gifle; Monsieur de Migurac; La Folle Aventure; Les Roses de France; La Petite Chaperon; Tous Héros; Un Pauvre Homme.

MACORLAN, PIERRE. Born in Péronne. Author: La Maison du Retour Ecœurant; Les Pattes en l'Air; Les contes de la Pipe en Terre; Le Rire Jaune; Les Poissons Morts; L'U 713 ou les Gentilhommes d'Infortune; Les Bourreurs de Crânes; Le Chant de l'Equipage; Les Mystères de la Morgue (in coopération with F. Carco); La Clique du Café Brebis; Le Fin (souvenirs d'Allemagne); Vanderpett et Napoléon; Le Nègre Léonard et le Maître Jean Miellin; A Bord de L'Etoile Matutine; Bob; La Bête Conquérante; Petit Manuel du Parfait Aventurier; L'Amour et les Saisons; Marguerite de la Nuit; L'Inhumaine; A l'Hôpital Marie Madeleine.

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MAURRAS, CHARLES. Born in Martigues (B.-du-R.), April 20, 1868. Author: Jean Moréas; Le Chemin de Paradis; Anthinéa; Les Amants de Venise; George Sand et Musset; Libéralisme et Lib-

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MILLE, PIERRE. Born in Choisy-le-Roi in 1864. Author: Sur la Vaste Terre; Sous leur Dictée; Caillou et Titi; Paraboles et Diversions; Le Monarque; Naer Eddine et son Epouse; Quand Panurge ressuscita; L'Enfant et la Reine morte; Histoires Exotiques et merveilleuses; La Nuit d'amour sur la Montagne; Trois femmes; L'Ange du Bizarre; Barnavaux; Le Monarque; Les Mémoires d'un dada besogneux de l'armistice à 1925; La Détresse des Harpagons; Hercule et Omphale; La Vérité sur la découverte de l'Amérique; La Victoire et . . . la Retraite; Sacerdos in Æternum; A Franc Etrier; Le Député.

MIOMANDRE, FRANCIS DE. Born in Tours, 1880. Author: Les Reflets et les Souvenirs; Ecrit sur de l'Eau; Le Vent et la Pous-sière; L'Ingénu; Mémoires de Gazelle, tortue; Au Bon Soleil; Visages; Figures d'Hier et d'Aujourd'hui; D'Amour et d'Eau Fraîche; L'Aventure de Thérèse Beauchamps; Le Veau d'or et la Vache enragée; Le Greluchon Sentimental; Olympe et Ses Amis; L'Enfant Prodigue et Son Pere; Une Etrange Amitie.

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MORAND, PAUL. Born March 13, 1888. Author: Lampes à Arc; Feuilles de Température; Tendres Stocks; Ouvert la Nuit; Fermé la Nuit; Lewis et Irène; L'Enfant de 100 ans. Les Amis Nouveaux; L'Europe Galante; Je Brule Moscou.

NOAILLES, COMTESSE MATHIEU DE. Born in Paris, November 15, 1876. Author: Le Cœur Innombrable; L'Ombre des Jours (poems); La Nouvelle Espérance; Le Visage Emerveillé; La Domination; De la Rive d'Europe à la Rive d'Asie; Les Vivants et les Morts; Les Eblouissements; Les Forces Eternelles; Les Innocentes; Tragédie Simple.

PEROCHON, ERNEST. Born in 1885. Author: Flûtes et Bourdons; Chansons Alternées; Le Creux des Maisons; Chemin de Plaine; Nène; Les Ombres; En se dandinant; Les Gardiennes; Sous la Bonne Etoile; Huit Gouttes D'Opium; Sur la Pointe des Pieds.

PICARD, GASTON. Born in Paris, January 18, 1892. Author: La Confession du Chat; Le cœur se donne; La bougie bleue; Des dames, des drames et des rames; Le dernier amour de Louise Payran; La danse de l'amour; La frande inquiétude des hommes.

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REBOUX, PAUL. Born in Paris, May 21, 1877. Author: *Josette*; *La Maison de Danses*; *Le Phare*; *La Petite Papacoda*; *Le Jeune Amant*; *A la Maniere De . . .*; *Elles et Lui*; *Trio*; *Le Nid*.

REGNIER, HENRI DE, de l'Académie Française. Born in Honfleur (Calvados), December 24, 1864. Author: *Premiers Poèmes*; *Poèmes 1887-1892*; *Les Jeux Rustiques et Divins*; *La Canne de Jaspe*; *Le Trèfle Blanc*; *La Double Maîtresse*; *Les Médailles d'Argile*; *Figures et Caractères*; *Les Amants Singuliers*; *Le Bon Plaisir*; *La Cité des Eaux*; *Le Mariage de Minuit*; *Les Vacances d'un jeune homme sage*; *Les Rencontres de M. de Bréot*; *Le Passé Vivant*; *La Sandale Ailée*; *Sujets et Paysages*; *Esquisses Vénitiennes*; *L'Amour et le Plaisir*; *La Peur le l'Amour*; *Les Scrupules de Sganarelle*; *Couleur du Temps*; *Le Miroir des Heures*; *La Flambée*; *L'Amphisbène*; *Contes de France et d'Italie*; *Portraits et Souvenirs*; *Le Plateau de Laque*; *Romaine Mirmault*; *L'Illusion héroïque de Tito Bassi*; *Poèmes 1914-1916*; *Les Petits Messieurs de Nèvres*; *Scenes Mythologiques*.

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THARAUD, JEROME ET JEAN. Born in St. Junien (Hte. Vienne), May 11, 1874. Authors: *Hommage au Général Charette*; *La Fête Arabe*; *La Bataille à Scutari d'Albanie*; *La Tragédie de Ravallac*; *La*

Mort de Paul Déroulède; L'Ombre de la Croix; Rabat, ou les Heures Marocaines; Une relève; Marakech ou les Seigneurs de l'Atlas; Un royaume de Dieu; La maîtresse servante; Dingley; L'Illustre Ecrivain; La Ville et les Champs; Quand Israël est Roi; La Randonnée de Samba Diouf; Un drame de l'Automne.

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VAUDOYER, J. L. Born in Plessis-Piquet (Seine), September 10, 1883. Author: Les Compagnes du Rêve; L'Amour masqué; La Bien-Aimée; Suzanne et l'Italie; Variations sur les Ballets Russes; La Nuit Persane Le Spectre de la Rose; Propos et Promenades; Les Papiers de Cléonthe; Les permissions de Clément Bellin; La Reine Evanouie; Entre Hier et Demain; Peau d'Ange; Raymonde Mangematin.

VEBER, PIERRE. Born in Paris, May 15, 1869. Author: Loute; Ma Fée; L'Aventure; Une Passade; Chez les Snobs; La Joviale Comédie; Les Véber; Les Enfants s'amuse; L'Ami de la Maison; Les Cocches profondes; Amour . . . Amour; Qui Perd Gagne; L'Homme qui vendit son âme au diable; L'Ecole des Ministres; Le Bonheur; Une Aventure de Pompadour; La jolie madame Livran; L'Entremise; Le Théâtre incomplet; Le Rebut d'Humanité; Le Geolier de Leavenworth.

VELY, ADRIEN. Born in 1864. Author: English School; Une Lecture; Monsieur Schnitz et Monsieur Schnatz; Les Petites Amies de Monsieur Gratien; Saint Gratien est dans nos murs; Nelson Brown, détective privé . . . de toute intelligence; En voilà des histoires.

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WOLFF, PIERRE. Born in Paris. Author: Les Maris de leurs filles; Les Marionnettes; Le Voile déchiré; Les Ailes brisées; Douce Esther; L'Homme qui égara son amour; La Préférée.

YVER, COLETTE. Born in Segré (Maine-et-Loire), July 28, 1874. Author: La Pension du Sphinx; Les Cervelines; La Bergerie; Comment s'en vont les Reines; Princesses de science; Les Dames du Palais; Le Métier de Roi; Un Coin du Voile; Les Sables Mouvants; Le Mystère des Béatitudes; Mirabelle de Pamelune; Les Cousins riches; L'Homme et le Dieu; La trouvaille de Lord Gardenhope; Vous serez comme les Dieux; Le Festin des Autres; Les Deux Naufragés.

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<i>B. L.</i>	Belles Lettres.
<i>Cr.</i>	Correspondant.
<i>L. D. L.</i>	Le Livre des Livres.
<i>L. L.</i>	Les Lettres.
<i>M.</i>	. . . . .	Les Marges.
<i>M. F.</i>	. . . . .	Le Mercure de France.
<i>M. PL.</i>	. . . . .	Les Maîtres de la plume.
<i>N. R.</i>	. . . . .	La Nouvelle Revue.
<i>N. R. F.</i>	. . . . .	Nouvelle revue française.
<i>N. R. CR.</i>	. . . . .	Nouvelle revue critique.
<i>R. B.</i>	. . . . .	La Revue Bleue.
<i>R. F.</i>	. . . . .	La Revue de France.
<i>R. M.</i>	. . . . .	La Revue Mondiale.
<i>R. & M.</i>	. . . . .	La Revue des Deux Mondes.
<i>R. H.</i>	La Revue Hebdomadaire.
<i>R. S.</i>	La Revue des Siècles.
<i>R. U.</i>	La Revue Universelle.

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- Divoire. Fernand. Sur Georges Duhamel, Candidat à l'Académie Goncourt. J. L. 13. 9. 24.
- Dumas, André. Quatre Poètes MM. ERNEST RAYNAUD, CHARLES DERENNES, ERNEST PREVOST, HENRY ALLORGE. R. B. 1. 11. 24.
- Duplay, Maurice. Critiques résumés, extraits, de l'Infirmes au mains de lumière Estaunié la Virginité (Frapié). Les lyons en croix (Lamandé). La Marche au soleil (Bonetti). Riquet à la Houpe et ses compagnons (Hesse). L. DL. 7. 24.
- Duplay, Maurice. Critiques, résumés, extraits de; l'aventure de Marise (P. Villetar). Les amants tourmentés (Vioux). Ariel ou la vie de Shelley (Maurois). Le Traître (J. M. Renaitour). L. de L. No. 31.
- Fleury René Albert. De l'Idéalisme absolu. N. R. C. R. 15. 2. 25.
- Giafferi, G. de. Deux ouvrages anonymes. R. CO. 28. 8. 24.
- Giraudoux, Jean. Criticus Le Style au microscope. N. R. C. R. 15. 1. 25.
- Groos, René. La Girouette de Bronze. M. 9. 24.
- Guillot, Munoz (Alvaro). Isidore Ducasse (Comte de Lautreaumont). R. A. L. 1. 2. 25.
- Heitz. Deux Romanciers d' Aujourd'hui, Roger Martin du Gard et Henri de Montherland). M. N. 15. 1. 25.
- Hertz. Alfred Jarry un roi et les professeurs. N. R. F. 1. 9. 24.
- Honnert, Robert. La Naissance du Critique. N. R. C. R. 15. 10. 24.
- Kahn, Plowert. (Paul Adam) M. 15. 7. 24.
- Lamande, André. Portraits d'Ecrivains, Jean Aivard. R. B. 15. 11. 24.
- Le Gris. Les frères Durandea Par Philippe Soupault. R. H. 15. 11. 24.
- Leguay, Pierre. Droult Revon. M. 15. 7. 24.
- Leguay, Pierre. Champion Jean Héritier Pierre Lièvre. M. 15. 7. 24.

- Leguay, Pierre. Livres de Zévaes, Hermant, Corpechot, Henriot, David, Barsaucourt, Beraud, et Castreras. M. 9. 24.
- Leguay, Pierre. Critique et Histoire littéraires. (Breton, lièvre, Droin, Beaunier, Gauchez, Masson). L'inconsolée de Graffigne. M. 15. 10. 24.
- Leguay, Pierre. Critique et Histoire littéraires. (Balzaguette, Cremieux Pourtales). M. 15. 12. 24.
- Leguay, Pierre. Critique et Histoire littéraires. (A Le Poitevin, Bellesort, Mauriac). M. 15. 8. 24.
- Leguay, Pierre. John Charpentier, Lady None-Becque, Adolphe Retté. M. 15. 3. 25.
- Leguay, Pierre. Critique et Histoire littéraires. M. 15. 1. 25.
- Leguay, Pierre. Critiques et Histoire littéraires. Chapion Mauras. M. 15. 2. 25.
- Le Sidaner, Louis. La vie vue par Paul Morand. N. R. C. R. 15. 9. 24.
- Marbo, Camille. Les Nouvelles Tendances du Roman Français l'Époque du Microscope et du Cinéma. R. B. 20. 9. 24.
- Marbo, Camille. Les Nouvelles Tendances du Roman Français premiers coup d'oeuil. R. B. 21. 6. 24.
- Martineau, René. Deux lettres de Tristan Corbière. M. 15. 7. 24.
- Masclaux, Pierre. Une mise au point à propos du second Faust. N. R. C. R. 15. 1. 25.
- Masse, Pierre. L'Œuvre de Marcel Coulon. B. L. 7. 24.
- Masson Loumaye. Chartois Stirling. M. 15. 7. 24.
- Maynial, Edouard. Le dédain de la nature. R. B. 7. 2. 25.
- Meunier, Mario. Humanisme Orient et Occident. M. 15. 8. 24.
- Millet, André. Critiques résumés extraits de: Grigri (Charasson) Adam, Eve et le Serpent, Christiane Fournier. L. D. L. 7. 24.
- Monglard, André. Une premier Obermann inconnu. R. F. 15. 12. 24.
- Montfort. Nozière et Bloch. M. 15. 10. 25.
- Montfort. Les romans d'Henriot, Martin, Chauffier, Radiguet, Decori, Dyssord. M. 15. 8. 24.
- Montfort. Fin de France. M. 15. 11. 24.
- Montfort. Les Soirées du Grammaire Club et les Lettres de Toulet. M. 15. 7. 24.
- Montfort. Les romans de Jolinon, Adrian, Touchard, Ravennes. M. 15. 7. 24.
- Montmorillon (Marquis de). Paul Cazin. R. B. 2. 8. 24.
- Mousse, Gaston. Critiques, résumés, extraits du Petit Guide du parfait parieur aux courses (La Fouchardière). L. D. L. 7. 24. Réponses de Boyer d'Agen de Fouquières Beaume, Dr. Daubret, A. Léger Mme. A. Daudet, G. Ista Lamandé Henriette Darier Pilon Guillot de Saix à la question que Pensez vous du roman français d'hier d'aujourd'hui de demain. L. D. L. 7. 24.
- Praviel, Armand. Les grands prix de l'Académie Française. C. R. 25. 7. 24.
- Prevost. Jeunesse de l'Odyssée. N. R. F. 1. 2. 25.
- Prevost, Jean. Jeunesse d'l'Odyssée. N. R. F. 1. 2. 25.

- Rain, Pierre. Portraits d'Ecrivains. Jacques Bardou. R. B. 17. 1. 25.
- Redon, Maxime. Des derniers romans de R. Boylesve. N. R. C. R. 15. 1. 25.
- Revon, Maxime. Trois Conteurs. MM. Henri Duvernois, Jacques Cheneviere, Robert De Traz. N. R. C. R. 15. 8. 24.
- Roz, Firmin. Le Realism et L'Humour. R. B. 5. 7. 24.
- Roz, Firmin. Un Romancier D'Après Guerre. François Duhoureau. R. B. 6. 9. 24.
- Roz, Firmin. Le Roman Dramatique et le Roman Panoramique. R. B. 2. 8. 24.
- Saurat, Denis. Proust et Joyce. M. 15. 12. 24.
- Thibaudet, Albert. La Psychologie Romanesque. N. R. F. 1. 8. 24.
- Thibaudet, Albert. Réflexions sur la littérature le problème de l'Ange. N. R. F. 1. 2. 25.
- Thibaudet, Albert. Réflexions sur la littérature. N. R. F. 1. 5. 25.
- Tinayre, Marcelle. L'avenir de nos filles l'Atique préjugé contre les femmes de lettres. C. F. 15. 10. 24.
- Valcombe, Madeleine de. Les Nomades essais sur l'exotisme. N. R. C. R. 15. 8. 24.
- Valmy, Baysee. La Rue d'Aujourd'hui. R. M. 1. 8. 24.

MAGAZINE AVERAGES

JULY, 1924, TO JULY, 1925

The following table includes the averages of distinctive stories in certain French periodicals published from July, 1924, to July, 1925, inclusive. One, two and three asterisks are employed to indicate relative distinction. "Three-asterisk stories" are of somewhat permanent literary value.

Periodicals	No. of Stories Published	Relative Merit of Stories Published			Percentage of Distinctive Stories Published
		*	**	***	%
Les Annales	12	5	2	5	41
Belles Lettres	1	1	0	0	0
Candide	28	3	11	14	50
Conteurs Inédits	1	0	0	1	100
Correspondant	6	3	3	0	0
Demain	22	3	6	13	45
Europe	7	5	1	1	14
Figaro	1	0	0	1	100
Grande Revue	7	4	2	1	14
Les Humbles	1	1	0	0	0
Illustration	1	0	1	0	0
Les Lettres	5	2	1	2	40
Lecture Pour Tous	7	3	3	1	15
Les Marges	17	11	5	1	5
Mercure de France	9	4	5	0	0
Nouvelles Littéraires	7	1	2	4	57
Nouvelle Revue	6	3	3	0	0
Nouvelle Revue Française	19	4	8	7	36
Œuvres Libres	41	10	18	13	31
Revue de l'Amérique Latine	12	9	3	0	0
Revue Bleue	18	10	5	3	16
Revue Critique	1	0	0	1	100
Revue Européenne	7	5	1	1	14
Revue de France	7	1	4	2	28
Revue Hebdomadaire	12	5	4	3	25
Revue des Deux Mondes	15	4	4	7	46
Revue Mondiale	13	4	8	1	7
Revue de Paris	4	3	1	0	0
Revue des Siècles	4	3	1	0	0
Revue Universelle	2	1	0	1	50

The following tables indicate the rank, during the period between July, 1924, and July, 1925, inclusive, by number and percentage of distinctive short stories published, of twenty periodicals coming within the scope of my examination which have published an average of ten per cent or more of distinctive stories. The lists exclude reprints, but not translations.

BY PERCENTAGE

Conteurs Inédits	100%
Figaro	100%
Revue Critique	100%
Nouvelles Littéraires	57%
Revue Universelle	50%
Candide	50%
Revue des Deux Mondes	46%
Demain	45%
Les Annales	41%
Nouvelle Revue Française	36%
Œuvres Libres	31%
Revue de France	28%
Revue Hebdomadaire	25%
Revue Bleue	16%
Lecture Pour Tous	15%
Europe	14%
Revue Européenne	14%

BY NUMBER

Candide	14
Demain	13
Œuvres Libres	13
Revue des Deux Mondes	7
Nouvelle Revue Française	7
Les Annales	5
Revue Bleue	3
Les Lettres	2
Revue de France	2
Conteurs Inédits	1
Europe	1
Figaro	1
Grande Revue	1
Lectures Pour Tous	1
Les Marges	1
Revue Critique	1
Revue Européenne	1
Revue Mondiale	1
Revue Universelle	1

INDEX OF SHORT STORIES PUBLISHED IN FRENCH MAGAZINES

JULY, 1924, TO JULY, 1925

All short stories published in the following magazines and newspapers are indexed, for which the following abbreviations are employed:

A. N.	Les Annales.
B. L.	Belles Lettres.
Ca	Candide
Co	Conteurs Inédits.
Cr	Le Correspondant.
D.	Demain.
Eu	Europe.
F.	Figaro.
G. R.	Grande Revue.
H.	Les Humbles.
IL.	Illustration.
L. L.	Les Lettres.
M.	Les Marges.
M. F.	Mercure de France.
N. L.	Les Nouvelles Littéraires.
N. R.	La Nouvelle Revue.
N. R. F.	Nouvelle Revue Française.
O. L.	Les Œuvres Libres.
R. A. L.	La Revue de l'Amérique Latine.
R. B.	La Revue Bleue.
R. C.	La Revue Critique.
R. & M.	La Revue des Deux Mondes.
R. F.	La Revue de France.
R. M.	La Revue Mondiale.
R. P.	La Revue de Paris.
R. S.	La Revue des Siècles.
R. E.	La Revue Européenne.
R. U.	La Revue Universelle.

The following periodicals have published during the same period three or more "three-asterisk stories."

Candide	14
Demain	13
Œuvres Libres	13
Revue des Deux Mondes	7
Nouvelle Revue Française	7
Nouvelles Littéraires	4
Les Annales	5
Revue Bleue	3
Revue Hebdomadaire	3

A

- *ADA, NECRI, *Stella Mattutina*, R. P. 15. 6. 25.
 **ANDRE, CUEL, *L'Homme Fragile*, R. H. 18. 4. 25.
 *ANDRE, MARIUS, *Les Etranges Aventures du Professeur Saignodos*, R. S. 1. 6. 25.
 ***ARAGNY, JEAN, *L'Ecole des Gigolos*, C. A. 12. 2. 25.
 ***ARAGON, Le Payson de Paris, R. E. 1. 6. 25.
 *ARLAND, MARCEL, *La Belle Aventure*, R. H. 11. 4. 25.
 **ARLAND, MARCEL, *Feuillets*, C. M. 1. 12. 24.
 **ARMOUX, ALEXANDRE, *Le Fauteuil*, M. F. 1. 4. 25.
 *ARMOUX, ALEXANDRE, *Supplement au Voyage de Marco Polo*, D. 8. 24.
 **AUBAREDE, G., *L'Ingrat*, N. R. F. 1. 2. 25.
 *AUBAREDE, G., *Fonds de Memoire*, R. H. 23. 5. 25.
 *AUSTRUY, *L'Olotelepan*, N. R. 15. 6. 25.
 **AVESNE, *La Barbotinière*, R. 2M. 15. 4. 25.

B

- **BAILLY, AUCUSTE, *Vertus de Frontiere*, C. A. 13. 11. 24.
 ***BAILLY, AUCUSTE, *L'Amour et M. Charibot*, O. L. 1. 25.
 **BARDAC, HENRI, *Le Visage du Bonheur*, D. 4. 25.
 *BANG, HERMANN, *Irene Holus*, E. U. 15. 1. 25.
 **BATIFFOL, *L'Enlèvement de Melle de Sainte Croix*, L. P. T. 10. 24.
 *BATAULT, GEORGES, *Sibyl*, M. F. 15. 3. 25.
 ***BAUMANN, EMILE, *La Dernière Paque de Saint Paul*, R. H. 4. 4. 25.
 ***BENOIT, PIERRE, *Le Jour du Grand Prix*, D. 7. 24.
 *BERGE, FRANCOIS, *Il y a encore quelques Pyrénées*, C. M. 1. 12. 24.
 **BERNARDEZ, *La Revanche*, R. AL. 1. 7. 24.
 *BERTRAND, LOUIS, *Jean Perbal*, R. 2M. 15. 4. 25.
 **BERTRAND, LOUIS, *La Vie Amoureuse de Louis xiv*, I. L. 20. 9. 24.
 *BEZRUC, PIERRE, *Ostrava*, EU. 15. 4. 25.
 ***BIDOU, HENRI, *La Fievre de Venise ou le Faux Magicien*, R. 2M. 1. 9. 24.
 **BILLOTET, *La Fausse Amoureuse*, R. M. 15. 5. 25.
 ***BILLY, ANDRE, *Mme. Collery et sa Fille*, F. 1. 25.
 **BINET, VALMER, *Le Bois Qui Parle*, O. L. 6. 25.

- ***BINET, VALMER, *Dieu et les Hommes*, C. A. 29. 1. 25.
 **BINET, VALMER, *Cette Haine*, O. L. 8. 25.
 **BINET, VALMER, *Une Morte*, O. L. 2. 25.
 *BIRABEAU, ANDRE, *Pour L'Amour de la Petite, Lucette, l'Affreux Homme et le Gentil Garçon*, C. A. 9. 10. 25.
 ***BIRABEAU, ANDRE, *Un Bon Petit Coin*, C. A. 9. 4. 25.
 ***BIZET, RENÉ, *Anne en Sabot*, R. U. 15. 6. 25.
 **BLAISIN, LOUIS, *La Messe*, R. B. 1. 11. 24.
 *BLANCO, FOMBONA, *La Saint Anachorete et le Mauvais Moine*, R. A. B. 1. 11. 24.
 *BONNARD, ABEL, *Les Morts*, A. N. 2. 11. 24.
 **BONZINAC, COMARON, *Echec et Mal*, R. H. 20. 12. 24.
 ***BOPP, LEON, *Jean Darien*, N. R. F. 1. 11. 24.
 **BORDEAUX, HENRI, *Vie et Mort d'un Chamois*, R. 2M. 1. 11. 24.
 **BORDEAUX, HENRI, *Le Cœur et le Sang*, R. 2M. 15. 2. 25.
 **BORDEAUX, HENRI, *La Boule de Cire*, AN. 7. 9. 24.
 **BORDEAUX, HENRI, *L'Hallucination de la Belle Madame D'Arboise*, C. A. 25. 12. 24.
 ***BORDEAUX, HENRI, *L'Amour et le Bonheur*, D. 10. 24.
 **BORDEAUX, HENRI, *Alpinus*, C. R. 10. 6. 25.
 ***BOREL, PIERRE, *Visage Inconnu de Marie Bashkirtseff*.
 *BOST, PIERRE, *Fin d'un Poeme*, R. H. 24. 1. 25.
 **BOST, PIERRE, *Meningite Sentimentale*, N. L.
 **BOUCHARDON, Collignon ou le Mauvais Cocher, L. P. T. 4. 25.
 **BOUCHARDON, Le Chateau de Bitremont, R. F. 15. 5. 25.
 ***BOUTET, FREDERIC, *La Troisième*, C. A. 12. 2. 25.
 ***BOUTET, FREDERIC, *Le Harem Eparpille*, O. L. 10. 24.
 ***BOUTET, FREDERIC, *Gribiche*, O. L. 2. 25.
 ***BOURGET, PAUL, *Le Chapiteau Roman*, R. 2M. 15. 12. 24.
 *BROUSSEAU, GEORGES, *Les Dieux en Exil*, R. M. 1. 9. 24.
 *BULER, MARTIN, *Rabbi Mosche Leib de Sasso*, EU. 15. 2. 25.
 ***BUSBY, COLIN, *Le Petit Jesus de Maison Celles*, G. R. 12. 24.

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- **CANUET, ALBERIC, *Regine Romani*, L. L. 14. 2. 25.

- **CARACIALE, A L'Aberge, C. A. 5. 2. 25.
 ***CASSOU, Le Tombeau des Enfants, N. L.
 **CASSOU, Baptême du Christ, N. L.
 ***CATHLIN, PAUL, L'Apparition, R. B. 21. 3. 25.
 *CECCHI, EMILIO, Sur le Portrait d'une Petite Fille, R. E. 1. 6. 25.
 ***CHAMPLY, HENRY, La Verus Pauvre, R. M. 1. 3. 25.
 *CHAMPLY, HENRY, Celle Qu'on Tue, O. L. 3. 25.
 **CHAUMEIX, MARCELLE, Les Jeux Defendus, D. 9. 24.
 ***CHERAU, GASTON, Braco, N. L.
 ***CHERAU, GASTON, Bilan, N. L.
 *CLARETIE, JULES, Les Deux Villes, An. 19. 4. 25.
 **CLEMENCEAU, JACQUEMAIRE, Juliette ou la Gourmandise, D. 2. 25.
 *COHEN, ROBERT, Poemes en Prose, N. R. 1. 4. 25.
 *COHEN, ROBERT, Les Ardanges, N. R. 1. 6. 25.
 ***COLETTE, Automne, AN. 19, 10. 24.
 ***COLETTE, Les Lunettes, AN. 2. 11. 24.
 **COLLY, TOSTE, Guanina Legende Portoricaine, R. A. L. 1. 8. 24.
 *COLLING, ALFRED, Grand Prix, 1925, R. E. 1. 3. 25.
 *COLLING, ALFRED, Confucius, N. R. F. 1. 10. 24.
 **CORTHIS, A., Le Piano Mecanique, C. A. 6. 11. 24.
 *COURTOIS, SUFFIT, Andre L'Aquarium de Nice, R. E. 1. 6. 25.
 *COUVREUR, ANDRE, Les Memoires d'un Immortel, O. L. 1. 25.
 ***CREVEL, RENE, Minutes au Ralenti, N. R. F. 1. 2. 25.
 ***CIVIL, VICTOR, Mayotte, O. L. 4. 25.
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 ***DAHL, ANDRE, Le Sucrier Empire, O. L. 1. 25.
 **DAIREAUX, MAX, Un Gentilhomme, C. A. 29. 1. 25.
 **DAVIGNON, Un Pelerin de Furnes, R. H. 28. 2. 25.
 *DEUCUIS, La Foret se Venge—Une Partie de Piquet le Complice, R. M. 1. 9. 24.
 ***DELARUE-MARDRUS, LUCIE, Le Veau Lunaire, C. A. 13. 11. 24.
 ***DELARUE-MARDRUS, LUCIE, Le Testament Anemas, D. 7. 24.
 ***DELARUE-MARDRUS, LUCIE, Le Beau Baiser, D. 5. 25.
 *DELEDDA, Les Fautes des Autres, C. R. 10. 1. 25.
 **DELTEIL, JOSEPH, Les Cinq Sens, N. R. F. 1. 8. 24.
 *DEMAISON, ANDRE, La Reine de L'Ombre—Un Rapt, R. 2M. 15. 11. 24.

- *DE QUIRHELLE, JEAN, Celui Qu'on Attendait Pas L. P. T. 4. 25.
 *DEREME, TRISTANT, De la Terre Qui Tourne, R. S. 1. 4. 25.
 *DERENNES, CHARLES, Filon—Le Lézard Vert, R. M. 15, 8. 24.
 ***DERENNES, CHARLES, Kiki Rat Blanc, D. 1. 25.
 ***DERENNES, CHARLES, Image D'Un Bar, C. A. 8. 12. 24.
 ***DERENNES, CHARLES, La Sirene, C. A. 9. 10. 24.
 ***DERENNES, CHARLES, Le Pour et le Contre, C. I.
 **DE ROBERT, LOUIS, Octavie, O. L. 8. 24.
 *DHUY, HENRI, Miroirs, M. 15. 7. 24.
 ***DIEUDONNE, HENRY, Le Nouveau General, An. 16. 11. 24.
 ***DIEUDONNE, HENRY, La Bouche Pleine, C. A. 30. 10. 24.
 **DOMINIQUE, PIERRE, Besoin D'Empire, C. A. 2. 4. 25.
 ***DOMINIQUE, PIERRE, Les Comdanes A Mort, C. A. 16. 10. 24.
 ***DOMINIQUE, PIERRE, La Reine de Saba, C. A. 19. 2. 25.
 ***DOMINIQUE, PIERRE, La Morte, D. 2. 25.
 **DOMINIQUE, PIERRE, La Proie de Venus, O. L. 11. 24.
 **DOMINIQUE, PIERRE, Le Roman D'Une Ile, R. S. 1. 4. 25.
 *DON RAMON DEL VALLE INCLAN, Rosanto, R. B. 2. 8. 24.
 *DORCELES, Sur la Route Mandarine, H. 31. 1. 25.
 ***DORCELES, ROLAND, En Panne Dans le Tam Diep, An. 19. 4. 25.
 ***DRIEU, LA ROCHELLE, Le Pique Nique, N. R. F. 1. 10. 24.
 *DUBOIS, LA CHARTE, Les Heures de Corfou, M. 15. 2. 25.
 **DU FOUR, Helene, N. R. 1. 8. 24.
 **DUHAMEL, Suite Hollandaise, EU. 15. 5. 25.
 **DUHAMEL, Le Dernier, R. B. 6. 6. 25.
 ***DUHOURCAU, La Demi Morte, R. 2M. 1. 9. 24.
 **DUMUR, LOUIS, La Croix Rouge et la Croix Blanche, R. M. 1. 4. 25.
 *DUNAN, RENE, L'Attaque, du Train 103, C. RA. 1. 4. 25.
 ***DUPLAY, MAURICE, L'Ecole des Larriens, O. L. 6. 25.
 *DURIKUX, JEHAN, Requiem, O. L. 2. 25.
 ***DUVERNOIS, HENRI, L'Eunuque, O. L. 2. 25.
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 *ECHAVARRIA, Galatee au Miroir, R. A. L. 1. 11. 24.
 *ENRIQUETA, MARIA, Elle Seule le Sait R. A. L. 1. 10. 24.

- **ESCHOLLIER, RAYMOND, Ils Ont Parle, D. 10. 24.
 *ESME, JEAN D', Les Barbares, R. P. 15, 5, 25.

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- **FARRERE, CLAUDE, Improbable Perversite, C. A. 1. 1. 25.
 ***FARRERE, CLAUDE, Cent Millions D'Or, D. 7. 24.
 ***FARRERE, CLAUDE, Une Jeune Fille Voyage, AN. 14. 12. 24.
 **FARRERE, CLAUDE, La Mort de L'Emden, R. F. 15. 1. 25.
 *FAYARD, JEAN, Journal D'Un Colonel, O. L. 3. 25.
 **FERET, Les Chauffeurs, O. L. 1. 25.
 **FERNANDEZ, RAMON, Surprises, N. R. F. 1. 9. 24.
 **FINOT LOUIS, Les Heros Voluptueux, R. M. 1. 12. 24.
 *FLUVERT, Les Derniers Plaisirs, M. 15. 10.
 **FORMONT, MAXIME, La Sirene, O. L. 8. 24.
 *FRACHON, Images des Antilles, R. A. L. 1. 3. 25.
 ***FRONDAIE, PIERRE, L'Homme A L'Hispano, L. L. 7. 3. 25.

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- *GACHOT, FRANCOIS, L'Equinoxe D'Avril, N. R. F. 1. 8. 24.
 *GALTIER, BOISIERE, Les Bobards de Nenette, C. R. A. 16, 3, 25.
 ***GALTY, JEANNE, Le Pelerinage de Psyche, D. 2. 25.
 **GENIAUX, CHARLES, L'Idole Bateke, O. L. 10. 24.
 **GENIAUX, CHARLES, Le Diable des Mers, R. B. 19. 7. 24.
 *GENIAUX, CHARLES, La Maison D'Eternite, R. 2M. 1. 6. 25.
 *GERMAN, JOSE, Le Roi des Coqs, O. L. 1. 11. 24.
 ***GIDE, ANDRE, Les Faux Monnayeurs, N. R. F. 1. 6. 25.
 *GILBERT, MARIUS, Adolphe et Clara, AN. 30. 9. 24.
 *GUEGUEN, PIERRE, Les Quatre Jeunes Gens de Lanor Huon, M. 15. 8. 24.
 *GOLDING, LOUIS, Le Jour du Grand Pardon, R. H. 15. 5. 25.
 ***GUY, GEORGES, Le Bracelet D'Or Rouge, R. H. 14. 2. 25.

H

- *HARLOVILLE, CLAUDE D', Les Puissances Trompeuses, R. B. 18. 4. 25.
 **HAGEL, CHARLES, Le Tresor, M. F. 1. 6. 25.
 *HARTEL, PAUL, Les Cailles D'Octobre, L. L. 10. 24.
 ***HARRY, MYRIAN, L'Impievable Tondresse, C. A. 15. 10. 24.

- **HARRY, MYRIAN, Le Manteau Tutoilaire, C. A. 8. 1. 25.
 ***HARRY, MYRIAN, La Veuve de Tout-anthamone, C. A. 5. 2. 25.
 ***HELLENS, FRANZ, La Pierre Hantee, D. 4. 25.
 **HELLENS, FRANZ, Sept Voyages D'Anibal, O. L. 2. 25.
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